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Council puts weight behind the white ribbon campaign
PAGE 5

LIFEGUARD CLUB RECEIVES BOOST

ABOVE: Rest Bay Lifeguard Club, which teaches lifeguard skills to people in the Porthcawl area, has received a £1,000 donation from Taylor Wimpey South Wales. *(SEE THE FULL STORY ON PAGE 3).*

Christmas Swim hoping to beat last year's record numbers!

Report by PHILIP IRWIN

PORTHCAWL is gearing up for the 51st Christmas morning swim – hoping to match the record numbers who braved the icy waters in 2014.

Last year's 50th anniversary celebrations were very well supported, with more than 1,500 swimmers registering with the organisers, and many more spectators on the beach.

The good news for spectators this year is that there will be plenty of room on the beach for the 11.45am start, as high tide is around 6am.

Ian Stroud, spokesman for the organising committee, said: "This year's theme for those who swim in fancy dress will be 'Pirates and Parrots' – giving a great family Christmas atmosphere and making for another very successful swim.

"Some friends of the swim travel home for Christmas so we get swimmers and spectators from all over the UK and abroad too, besides those who come from the south Wales area.

"The arrangements on the morning will follow last year's changes in that as swimmers register, they will receive their commemorative mug before the swim.

"Therefore, whether they have registered on line or on the morning they must come to the registration desk from 10.30am onwards. Swimmers will leave the Hi Tide Inn and gather at the top of the beach for the start at 11.45am.

"We are planning to have the 'start arch' erected on the beach so that every swimmer will file through. Porthcawl Coastguard will signal the start and veteran swimmers Vic Davies and Chris Hughes – both from Porthcawl and the only two swimmers that have taken part in all of the previous swims – will lead the swimmers down the beach through the spectators."

He continued: "Running up to Christmas our small committee have to work tirelessly to raise enough money to fund the cost of the swim, the souvenir programmes and the much sought after swim mugs."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

Organ donor law comes into force

WALES has changed the law relating to organ donations in a bid to cut the backlog of people awaiting transplants.

The basis of the new legislation is that people will have to actually take steps to 'opt out' – otherwise it will be presumed that they consent to having organs removed after death for the transplant programme.

(For more details on how the new law will operate, see page 8).

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READERS' LETTERS

'No-go areas' and a question of integration

I WRITE with regard to the article headed *'Multiculturalism has run its course… we must focus on integration,'* **by Dr Attaf Hussain (The GEM, November 19).**

Well, I am outraged! I was born in Barry nearly 80 years ago, and had the privilege of growing up in what we understood was a 'Christian country'.

Not everyone shared our devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, but this did not affect our relationships or friendships, even towards those from other countries and cultures. Christianity teaches us to love – even to love our enemies.

I take exception to Dr Hussain telling us all that "we must focus on integration." Is it not true that some parts of the UK have been taken over to such a degree that they are virtually no-go areas?

Many families make every effort to send their children to Islamic schools and colleges; they dictate how their wives and daughters should dress, and who their daughters should marry.

Women are downgraded to less than second class and non-Muslims are called "*dhimmies*" (second class citizens).

If I visited some Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, I would not be allowed to take my Bible with me, and I would certainly not be allowed to build any kind of Christian church.

Saudi Arabia, which is given such a high profile in this country, allows public executions where people go along to observe these events, then go home to resume their lives.

The bloodshed there is quite comparable to that in Syria.

FOOTNOTE:
The GEM has withheld the elderly lady writer's name and address.

Choir's thanks

I AM pleased to report that the Barry Male Voice Choir recruitment evening was a great success and 19 prospective new members attended.

Now we hope that the majority of them will stay to increase the choir numbers and enjoy the experience as much as last year's recruits.

Thank you for the ongoing support provided by The GEM for all Barry Male Voice Choir activities.

B R Edwards, Treasurer,
Barry.

Poem born of love

I WOULD just like to say how beautiful the poem was to Ella Rhian (GEM birth notices last week).

She is a very lucky little girl to have such a loving great grandad who has so eloquently and tenderly said the words his dear wife is now unable to express because of her illness.

I hope Ella will treasure it forever and the love of her great grandparents.

It is a gift to be able to put into words the way we feel, and to be caring enough to take the time to say those beautiful words on behalf of the wife he obviously loves dearly, is rare indeed.

Glenys Priest,
Barry.

Moved to tears

I AM writing while crying after reading the poem in the birth notices in last week's GEM.

I had to write to say how beautiful it is, while being a sad reminder of what a cruel illness Alzheimer's disease is.

What a beautiful poem, and good advice, and I hope Ella Rhian has a wonderful long and happy life.

(***Name and address supplied***).

Pupils take recycling to creative heights – with a festive theme!

Young entrepreneurs at St Mary's Catholic Primary School are selling festive products made out of recyclable materials.

ENTERPRISING students at a Bridgend school have created festive gifts using recyclable materials.

From snowmen made out of cotton wool and socks, to colourful decorations using plastic bottles, the gifts have been developed by members of St Mary's Catholic Primary School's 'Business Club', and are being sold this week at the school's Christmas craft fair.

Over the last month, 12 pupils aged 8-10 have been learning about all aspects of business, carrying out market research, and calculating their costs and profit margins.

Their ideas will now be put on sale at the Christmas fair, and all of the proceeds will be used to create boxes for a shoe box appeal in the local area.

Headteacher Lyndon Watkins explained: "We run a business club each term, and the current theme is 'An Eco Christmas,' as a lot of waste is created around Christmas, such as packaging and paper.

"The pupils were challenged to work in pairs to create their products and consider the business principles behind them. They have shown so much initiative, even coming up with incentives and special offers to help 'upsell' their products.

"Their creations will be on sale at our Christmas craft fair today (December 3) from 2.30pm, and we're looking forward to seeing which team makes the most profit!"

Bridgend PACT

YNYSAWDRE cuppa with a copper *today, Thursday, December 3 at Ynysawdre Community Hall, 2pm-3pm.*

SARN cuppa with a copper *on Monday, December 7 at Sarn Life Centre, 2pm-3pm.*

MAESTEG PACT *on Monday, December 7, in Cwm Calon Day Centre, 6pm,*

CAERAU PACT *on Monday, December 7 at Noddfa Chapel, 6pm.*

SARN and BRYNCOCH PACT *on Monday, December 7 at Sarn Life Centre, 7pm.*

LLANGYNWYD cuppa with a copper *on Tuesday, December 8 at Llangynwyd Village Hall, 10am to midday.*

OGMORE VALE and NANTYMOEL PACT *on Wednesday, December 9 at Dinam Close Sheltered Accommodation, 7pm.*

BLAENGARW and PONTYCYMER PACT *on Friday, December 18 at Blaengarw Rugby Club, 6.30pm.*

If you have any non emergency issues that are affecting your quality of life, but are unable to attend a meeting, contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101; or e-mail www.ourbobby.com.

HIGH TIDE TIMES

(UNTIL DECEMBER 10)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
03 Thur	11.24	8.1	23.58	7.8
04 Fri			12.28	8.0
05 Sat	01.09	7.7	13.43	7.8
06 Sun	02.21	7.9	14.51	8.0
07 Mon	03.23	8.1	15.42	8.3
08 Tues	04.12	8.5	16.31	8.7
09 Wed	04.53	8.9	17.11	9.1
10 Thur	05.31	9.3	17.47	9.3

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

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Coetir Ysbryd y Llynfi

Public chooses a new name for the Maesteg washery woodland project

AFTER a public vote, the new name for the Llynfi Valley Community Woodland is Coetir Ysbryd y Llynfi.

Natural Resources Wales is creating the new woodland on the site of the former Coegnant Colliery and Maesteg Washery in a project funded by the Welsh Government Nature Fund.

Work to convert the 30 hectare site began last month, when diggers moved in to prepare the ground ready for the planting of 60,000 trees over the winter.

Now the preparatory work is completed, planting is under way and, as part of National Tree Week, children from seven local schools are planting a mixture of broadleaves and ornamental trees at the site.

The new name Coetir Ysbryd y Llynfi (The Spirit of Llynfi Woodland in English), was suggested by Heidi Bennett, chief executive of Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), based in Maesteg, and was selected by local schoolchildren and councillors and Communities First representatives.

Emyr Roberts, chief executive of Natural Resources Wales, said: "The Coetir Ysbryd y Llynfi project gives us the opportunity to show how we can take forward the sustainable management of natural resources and deliver benefits for local communities.

"Having green spaces on our doorstep is not just good for wildlife, it also helps people feel better about their community and provides an area to unwind and exercise.

"NRW's purpose is to ensure that our environment and natural resources are maintained, enhanced and used."

Ford Motors, which has 300 employees living in and around the Llynfi Valley, has made a significant financial contribution to the project for the next 10 years and has also committed volunteering days to support the development of the project.

The partnership with Ford will support tree planting and developing green exercise facilities providing a space for health and well-being activities for the community.

Mark Thomas, Bridgend plant sustainability manager, said: "Ford is very excited to be Natural Resources Wales' partner. We look forward to many hours of staff volunteering time spent in the woodland."

£1,000 BOOST FOR LIFEGUARD CLUB

ABOVE: Rest Bay Lifeguards with sales and marketing director Sara Taylor.

REST BAY Lifeguard Club, which teaches lifeguard skills to people in the Porthcawl area, has received a £1,000 donation from Taylor Wimpey South Wales.

The cash will be used to help purchase high-visibility vests for the nipper and junior sections of the 200-member club.

"These high-vis vests are for our younger members to ensure they can be seen in the water while they are training," explained Chris Howells of Rest Bay Lifeguards.

"We needed sponsorship to help us buy them all though, so we're very grateful to Taylor Wimpey for this donation, which will help to buy about 120 vests."

Rest Bay Lifeguards offers training and encourages teamwork through competition, and its members range in age from as young as seven up to 60 and over.

The club participates in events throughout south Wales and the younger members must demonstrate that they can swim eight lengths front crawl, dive and tread water for two minutes before they can join.

CAERAU REPAIRS WILL COMPLETE £6m RENOVATION

MUCH-NEEDED repairs are to be carried out on eight homes in Greenfield Terrace, Caerau, in the final leg of a £6m scheme.

In 2006, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) established a housing renewal area in the Caerau ward using Welsh Government grant funding to help improve the standards of local housing and amenities over a ten year period.

Since then, over 700 properties have benefited from upgrades, but work at Greenfield Terrace had to be delayed while the new Caerau Primary School was being constructed.

At the time, Greenfield Terrace became the only access road for constructors working on the new school, so the housing repairs had to be held back.

That work has now been given the go-ahead, and Coun Hywel Williams, BCBC's cabinet member for communities, said: "These repairs form the final part of the multi-million-pound housing renewal programme in Caerau and I hope for a continuation of the excellent work that has already been carried out.

"The renewal programme comes to a close next year, so it is excellent news that the homes on Greenfield Terrace can now be included, and it is hoped that work will start there in April 2016."

In addition to the housing repairs and improvements, work carried out included a £13,000 upgrade of the senior citizens' centre, £11,000 improvements to the Bethel and Salem chapels and the £10,000 demolition of a derelict house which was replaced with a walled garden.

Japanese knotweed was also safely removed from the area and new street signage introduced along with highway, footpath and drainage improvements.

Sign pledge to recycle more plastic at home

FROM shampoo bottles to yoghurt pots, homes quickly fill up with plastic containers that can be recycled into new products.

But an astonishing 15 million plastic bottles are binned in the UK every day, and only 30 per cent of plastic pots, tubs and trays are recycled.

To help tackle this, households are being urged to sign up for the national #Pledge4Plastics campaign and make a pledge to recycle one extra plastic container each week.

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) is supporting the campaign and is reminding residents that they can recycle a wide range of plastics by placing them in their blue bags ready for the weekly recycling collection.

Plastic tubs, bottles, pots and punnets can all go in the blue bags, while harder plastics such as clothes hangers, children's toys and CD cases can be taken to the household recycling centres in Tythegston, Brynmenyn Industrial Estate and the Heol Ty Gwyn Industrial Estate in Maesteg.

Coun Hywel Williams, the council's cabinet member for communities, said:

"Last year, residents recycled nearly 1,500 tonnes of plastic through their kerbside collections.

"But there is always room for improvement, and if everyone made an extra effort to recycle just one or two more plastic containers each week, then that would have a dramatic effect on the amount of plastic that ends up in landfill."

Everyday household plastics can be recycled into a vast range of products – not just more bottles and tubs!

For example, an empty butter tub can be used to make a shiny new kitchen table, while many of the football kits being worn every week in the Barclays Premier League are made out of polyester, which has been fabricated from recycled plastic bottles.

Other products that can be made from recycled plastic include clothes, duvets, garden furniture, kids' toys, kitchen utensils, pens, fencing and pipes.

To recycle plastics, remember to wash out the bottle or container and place it in your blue bag, ready for the weekly recycling collection.

The council points out that it is not currently possible to recycle black plastic food trays, such as the ones used for ready meals.

To make your own pledge to recycle more plastic, visit www.pledge4plastics.co.uk.

For further information about recycling in Bridgend county borough, visit www.bridgend.gov.uk or call 01656 643643.

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Charity's 'ethical Christmas feast'

THE Porthcawl-based charity, Sustainable Wales, is holding its 2015 Ethical Christmas Feast with the help of '19 Mary Street', the new tapas and cocktail bar in Porthcawl, on Tuesday, December 15 from 7.15pm.

Margaret Minhinnick, director, said: "This year offers a shared dining experience, with a variety of platters that can be enjoyed by groups of friends, or fellow diners encountered for the first time.

"19 Mary Street is a wonderfully convivial place, a youthful venture that should be supported."

Tickets are available from SUSSED, 4/5 James Street, Porthcawl.

For more information, check www.sustainablewales.org.uk; telephone 01656 783962 or email: mm@sustainablewales.org.uk.

Annual Friendship Concert

AT 7pm on Friday, December 4 Bridgend Male Choir will present a concert at St Mary's Catholic Church, Ewenny Road.

They will sing Christmas items and songs from current repertoire at this shared concert with the choir of St Mary's School. The children will entertain with enchanting Christmas music, as they meet up again with their senior counterparts.

Tickets, £5 are available from both choirs or at the church on the night.

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Who wants to build where?

*Costa Limited – **Unit 1, Parc Plaza, Waterton** – One internally illuminated totem sign.*

*Miss Michelle Allen – **20 Gelli Aur, Pencoed** – Prune and crown reduce oak tree to rear and cut back overhanging branches of oak in no.19.*

*Miss Liz Phillips – **Anwen Care Home, Heol Pant-yr-Awel, Ogmore Vale** – Reduce crown by 3m, crownlift to 6m, crown thin by 10 per cent and remove branches in crown.*

*Mrs Avanda King – **19 Verlands Way, Pencoed** – Removal of beech tree due to erosion of brook banking.*

*Mr Andrew Randall – **Ashfield House, 13 Merthyr Mawr Road, Bridgend** – Crown reduce 30 per cent copper beech tree.*

*Mr John Williams – **Greyfriars Barn, Clevis Hill, Porthcawl** – Conversion and extension of existing barn and outbuildings to create a dwelling.*

*St Brides Minor Community Council – **Land adjacent to memorial hall, Heol Canola, Bryncethin** – Extend existing car park and creation of new exit onto Heol Canola with tree planting and wildflower meadow.*

*CDS Superstores International – **Unit 6 and 7, Royal London Park, Waterton** – Installation of a polytunnel in the warehouse yard, to aid the management of stock deliveries.*

*Mr Gavin Burridge – **139 Yr-Ysfa, Maesteg** – Proposed loft extension.*

*Agrivert Ltd – **Parc Stormy Down Airfield, Porthcawl** – Non material amendment to condition 14 of P/14/700/FUL.*

*Mr Huw Wade – **121 Ewenny Road, Bridgend** – Store room extension.*

*M J Standen – **3 Picton Place, Nanyffyllon** – Amendment to approval P/13/693/FUL (rear extension built 200mm deeper).*

*Mrs G Pring – **18 Danygraig Avenue, Danygraig, Porthcawl** – Conversion of attic into bedroom and en-suite and provide pitched roof to side annexe.*

*BCBC Property Department – **Maesteg Market, Talbot Street, Maesteg** – Installation of new signs and window covers to each elevation of the building.*

*Mr A Mallett – **Ar Graig, Laleston** – Certificate of lawfulness for proposed use of stables as a n c i l l a r y accommodation.*

*Mr and Mrs P Markey – **Sunny View, Marlpit Lane, Porthcawl** – Single storey rear extension.*

*Mr S Williams – **Maendy Farm, Lakeside Farm Park access, Evanstown** – Two storey side extension.*

*Llanmoor Development Co Ltd – **Land west of Maesteg Road, Tondu** – Approval of details for conditions 2 and 3 of P/15/494/FUL.*

*Mr Mostyn Phillips – **3 Heol Adare, Ynysawdre** – Loft conversion to existing detached bungalow.*

'Handz' campaign focus on washing to beat infections

BRIDGEND MP Madeleine Moon is urging constituents to 'go back to basics' to prevent the spread of deadly infections.

Antibacterial and other antimicrobial infections represent a serious threat to public health.

On Wednesday, November 25, Mrs Moon joined scientists, campaigners and political representatives from across the UK for the launch of the 'Handz' campaign.

The Handz campaign was the brainchild of Andrea Jenkyns MP and has received the support and endorsement of Emma Reynolds MP, Dr Philippa Whitford MP, and Dame Sally Davies, the Chief Medical Officer.

Following the launch, Madeleine said: "Poor hand hygiene has an appalling human cost. During the campaign launch, I was deeply moved by the stories of those who have lost parents and friends to preventable infections. Though children and elderly people are particularly vulnerable, we are all exposed on a daily basis to hand-transmitted infections. Since the invention of penicillin almost a century ago, antibiotics have saved the lives of millions of people who would otherwise have died from common infections. However, due to the over-prescription of antibiotics, bacteria has become increasingly resistant. A.

"Killer infections such as MRSA, caught and spread in hospitals, often grab the headlines. But whilst it is important that hand-hygiene standards are maintained in the NHS, we must all take responsibility for preventing the spread of infections.

"CMV, or cytomegalovirus, is a deadly infection that is commonly transmitted from pregnant mothers to their babies. Around 1,000 babies die from CMV every year in the UK and many more are born with debilitating disabilities.

"By washing our hands with soap and warm water for just 30 seconds, we can all do our bit to prevent the spread of CMV and other infections like it."

FLORAL EXPERT VISITS PORTHCAWL

THE Porthcawl Floral Arrangement Society recently hosted a demonstration by a leading Welsh expert, Adrian Cooke from Pembroke.

The society meets every other Wednesday in the Awel-y-Mor Centre in Porthcawl, and Mr Cooke's demonstration, entitled 'designs for Christmas', was very well attended, as he produced some complex and imaginative arrangements, and passed on plenty of useful advice.

Society member Mair Stockford told The GEM: "The society has been going in Porthcawl for more than 50 years.

"A year's membership is £20, and this entitles members to a discount on special events such as Adrian Cooke's demonstration.'

She added that club meetings are fortnightly at Awel-y-Mor 7.30pm alternating between a flower demonstration and a practice night.

The practice night is for members only. The tutor, Maureen Fargie, is a Chelsea medal winner.

Porthcawl TG fair

PORTHCAWL Townswomen's Guild is holding a Christmas fair on December 4, at Trinity Church Hall, from 10.30am, in aid of the British Lung Foundation.

"Many stalls and a great raffle...Do come and support this great cause!" a spokeswoman urged.

Santa and three of his willing elf helpers, wait to welcome his little visitors.

Santa & Co settle into his new grotto in Porthcawl museum

SANTA CLAUS and his reindeer braved the wind and rain to pay their first visit to his new grotto, now at the museum in John Street.

He and his elf helpers are very pleased with their new home and are ready and waiting for lots of excited little visitors who will each have time to talk to Santa and choose a present.

The grotto is open every Saturday in December until Christmas and also on Sunday, December 6. Entry is £3 per child and includes a choice of quality gift.

Activities for the over-50s

The public were encouraged to give their views on 'Ageing Well in Bridgend'.

BCBC'S sport, play and active wellbeing service recently gave for older members of the community a taste of activities available to them in the county borough. They gathered in Bethlehem Life Centre, Cefn Cribwr, for an afternoon of dancing and socialising, and learnt about other activities, such as Nordic walking through Love2Walk, and the range of local exercise classes available.

'White Ribbon' campaign against domestic violence

AS the annual White Ribbon campaign gets under way – aiming to end domestic violence against women – a new service has been launched in Bridgend which offers victims access to a wide range of support.

Based at the Civic Offices on Angel Street, the Domestic Abuse Support and Information Service brings organisations such as the council, South Wales Police, Probation Service, Victim Support and Calan DVS together as part of a multi-agency hub.

To access the service, and speak to someone in confidence, please ask at reception for the 'Assia Suite'. The suite has been named in honour of Assia Newton, from Pencoed, who was tragically murdered in her home after decades of domestic abuse.

Coun Marlene Thomas, the council's domestic abuse champion, said: "Domestic abuse statistics make startling reading. Did you know that every week, two women are killed in the UK by their ex or partner? Or that almost half of all women in the UK will experience domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking at some point in their lives?

"Nobody should live in fear, and it is also important to remember that emotional abuse is as damaging as physical abuse. We must all work together to end violence against women and, as always, I am keen to do all that I can to encourage others to speak out."

To access the new Domestic Abuse Support and Information service, ask for the 'Assia Suite' at the Civic Offices in Bridgend, or call 01656 815919.

Alternatively, you can email the team at assia@calandvs.org.uk. To find out more about the White Ribbon campaign, visit www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk.

BCBC Leader Mel Nott, Bethan Lindsey-Gaylard – the council's domestic abuse and sexual violence co-ordinator; Coun Marlene Thomas – the council's domestic abuse champion; Mayor Richard Young, Coun Hailey Townsend – cabinet member for children's social services and equalities, and Darren Mepham – BCBC chief executive, lending their support to the White Ribbon and #SpeakOut campaigns.

'Cap locums' earnings' says ex-NHS consultant

A RETIRED NHS consultant, now a Welsh Conservative Regional AM for South Wales West, has called for a cap on the earnings of locum agencies.

Dr Altaf Hussain said: "Losing four practices in the ABMU Health Board area in the last 18 months is extremely worrying and represents a trend that must be addressed urgently – especially given the 'wider factors,' such as an ageing population that the board's director is correct to identify.

"While the extra cash that has been given to address issues in primary care is welcome – if perhaps overdue - this does not tackle the root of the problem.

"Workforce planning is at the heart of the issue – we all know that Wales needs to recruit and retain more doctors.

"Because we do not have enough doctors, agency costs are crippling health board finances. The Welsh Government should consider the introduction of a cap on agency charges to prevent resources being systematically sucked out of our local health boards.

"We all know that agencies pay rates to locum doctors that are very attractive, and that our NHS simply cannot afford to match. This creates disincentives for young aspiring GPs to become partners in local surgeries – the old-fashioned 'family doctors', if you like.

"They may well be thinking – 'why should I invest in becoming a partner, hiring staff and doing all that is involved with being responsible for a practice, when I can earn considerably more through an agency'?

"To a large extent this is human nature – but when a considerable investment of public money has been made in their training and development, this practice cannot be right and must be tackled.

"We have created a vicious circle – the earnings offered to GPs working through agencies contribute towards the staffing shortages, which the agencies are then hired to address. This is madness.

"From a clinical perspective, it also has significant implications for continuity of care, effective clinical governance and the continuing professional development of personnel.

"Part of being a clinician is making a life-long commitment to learning – yet agency work has become, in sadly too many instances, about little more than earning.

"It all adds up to a set of circumstances that could have a catastrophic effect on the well-being of the patient – as the information published last week highlights.

"Elsewhere in the UK, a cap on locums' earnings has rightly been introduced – to me it is quite clear that Wales must now follow suit."

Maesteg health concerns

A REPORT by Public Health Wales recently revealed that people living in the Llynfi Valley have 20 years fewer healthy life expectancy, compared to the rest of Bridgend county borough.

It has prompted the formation of a partnership between community groups, businesses, councillors, local authority, ABMU health board, GP practices, public health, NRW, police, social landlords and residents which will follow up highlighted areas of concern.

At a Maesteg fair, local residents agreed to work together with businesses and the community.

"We want to raise awareness of how people can improve their own wellbeing and health and make better use of, and improve access to local services and resources, as well as developing new initiatives where possible," a spokeswoman said.

There will be a get-together for a cuppa and mince pie on Thursday, December 17 at Central Church, Maesteg from 11am – 3pm.

For further details, call BAVO on 01656 810400 or bavo@bavo.org.uk.

Local pupils help at Christmas tree festival

PUPILS from year-10 in St Clare's Porthcawl spent an enjoyable afternoon decorating their special tree in front of the pulpit at All Saints Church, Porthcawl for the annual Christmas Tree Festival.

The festival is organised by The Rotary Club of Porthcawl and the St Clare's pupils belong to Interact Club, the school's branch of Rotary.

Pupils meet once a forthnight and support a local and international charity each year. Their chosen charity this year is Wales Air Ambulance.

Liz Lougher, a teacher at St Clare's said: "We are really proud of our Interact pupils. They develop very useful life skills in being active members of the local community."

The Christmas Tree Festival runs until December 5 at All Saints Church, Porthcawl.

Author back with new book

BRIDGEND-born author Nicole Burnett has just published her latest book entitled *The Pretty Nostalgic Year Book 2016*, which she describes as a "traditional style annual for grownups that love British history and nostalgic trips down memory lane."

She and her family recently moved back to the area.

Pretty Nostalgic was originally founded as an independent magazine in 2012 and it was voted one of the top 12 best indie magazines in the world by The Independent newspaper earlier this year.

The Pretty Nostalgic Year Book 2016 can be bought or ordered from all good book shops, or online, priced £20.

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YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS...

SOS for Garw choir

I WAS shocked to hear that Côr Meibion Cwm Garw (Garw Valley malechoir) is disbanding because of falling membership.

As a school governor in the Garw Valley, I wonder if parents realise how much choirs in the area contribute in raising funds in these times of austerit.

You do not need to be a Bryn Terfel or Harry Secombe to be a chorister, and help to save this renowned choir.

Tomorrow (Friday December 4) under the baton of its excellent musical director Bryan Young, it is performing in a concert at Blaengarw Working Men's Club to raise funds for the charity Children of Chernobyl Lifeline with guest soloist, Aled Williams.

Surely the men in the valley want to help this choir from disbanding so that it can carry on raising funds for such worthwhile charities?

Appearing in the same concert will be the guest female choir Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi from Maesteg, under the baton of its well-known musical director Paul Deenik; tickets are £5 on the door.

Grassroots Cwm Garw

A PUBLIC meeting with an open agenda was recently held at the Halo Centre in Pontycymer when representatives from Blaengarw, Pontycymer and Betws villages were in attendance.

They expressed their concerns about community safety, litter, missing safety railings and the shabby environment (in certain areas) and signed up to do simple things and hopefully make positive changes in their areas.

It was agreed by all that it was important to work with community and county councillors and, of course, the police so they could be as effective as possible.

At the meeting, two new street ambassadors were signed up for New Street and Oxford Street in Pontycymer to help to look after neighbours. They will discuss ideas and problems at a monthly meeting with other street ambassadors from their village.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 14 at 6.30pm in Halo Leisure Centre, Pontycymer.

Church festival

THE Wesley Centre, Tondu Methodist Church will be holding its Christmas tree festival and bazaar on Saturday, December 5 between 10am and 3pm.

Trees provided by local organisations and decorated in a variety of themes will light up the church and in the hall there will be a range of stalls with refreshments and light lunches available. There will also be another opportunity to see the fascinating exhibition on pipe organs in chapels and churches in the Bridgend area, the Valleys and the Vale. Entry is free.

On December 9 at 6.30pm, the church will be holding its carol service with contributions from local school choirs and its own choir. Everyone is welcome.

Festive celebrations

A CHRISTMAS craft fair will be held in Maesteg Town Hall between 10am and 12pm this Saturday, December 5.

The Llynfi Valley Council of Churches will be blessing the crib outside the council offices at 10:30am.

The town Christmas parade will begin at 3:45pm in Ewenny Road and is due to arrive at the centre at 4:30pm in time for the Christmas decoration lights switch-on, which will be followed by a fireworks display.

Charity concerts

CÔR Meibion Maesteg a'r Cylch (Maesteg and District male choir) recently performed in a concert at Laleston Primary School to help raise funds for the charity Multiple Sclerosis.

The choristers were delighted that the school hall was full on such a stormy night.

The musical director Rhian Jenkins, with accompanist Ryan Wood, ensured the choir sang to its true potential as it started proceedings with 'Men of Harlech' and 'Rachie', two traditional Welsh hymns.

Guest artiste Charlotte Ellett sang classical songs and on completion the evening prompted the representative from Multiple Sclerosis to say he had never experienced such wonderful singing.

The following evening, the choir was at Whitchurch Rugby Club to sing in another concert, this time for the charity Help For Heroes, with soloist Kevin Lloyd causing a stir with his wonderful renditions of 'Bring him Home' and 'Stars'.

Recruits are welcome on a Thursday at 7pm and every other Tuesday at Maesteg Celtic sports and social club.

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: CLIVE MITCHELL
1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ
TEL: 01656 725399
email: tynycoed1@yahoo.co.uk

Children In Need

I WAS honoured to be invited by Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen (Ynysawdre Comprehensive) sixth formers on the school council to witness a few of the events they were organising to raise money for theBBC's Children in Need charity.

At the time, I was informed that after completing all the following events they hoped to raise at least £4,000 which would be a school record, including 'Name the Bear' quiz, an inter-college dodgeball tournament; non-uniform day, Children in Need merchandise, 'Rub-a-Dub-Dub, Six Head-Of-College in a Tub!' plus many other events.

I must congratulate everyone involved, for the final figure far exceeded their most optimistic projections. They actually raised £6,038.62. Well done to all.

School concert

TYNYRHEOL Primary School Llangeinor's classes 2 – 3 will be performing in the Christmas concert 'Silent Night' in the school hall on December 8 – 9.

Class 1 Nativity, *Toby's Christmas Drum*, will be on December 11 at 9.30am.

The PTFA and the Richard Price Centre have organised for a pantomime to come to Llangeinor as a community event. *Cinderella* will be performed in the centre on Friday, December 4 at 7pm, tickets £3. All proceeds will go towards the school and the centre.

Busy choir!

MY wife and I truly enjoyed the carol concert performed by the Ogmore Valley male choir at St Bride's Church, Llansantffraid last Friday evening, November 27.

The church was packed with additional seating having to be provided to latecomers. The choir, conducted by Eira Paskin, assisted by accompanist Gareth Waite, started the concert with the Welsh favourite 'Calon Lan'. Choir secretary John Jones recited two poems, in one of which titled 'The Freedom Women of Fishguard' he was ably assisted by his young granddaughter Nia Compton, who also recited verses from the poem.

The choir sang an amazing total of 18 songs – it must be one of the busiest choirs in south Wales. Today (December 3) it will be entertaining people recovering from a stroke at the Evergreen Hall, Bridgend. In the evening it is entertaining the residents of Cwrt Gwalia, an old people's home in Ogmore Vale.

On Friday evening, December 4 it travels to Wick to perform in the Welfare Hall to raise money for a charity that supports people suffering from brain tumours.

On December 6 at 7pm, it will lead the carol singing at St Cien's Church, Llangeinor and on December 9 at 6.15pm it will sing in a carol service in Laleston church to raise funds for the Soroptimists.

The choir, based at Canolfan Bethlehem, Commercial Street, Ogmore Vale rehearses on Thursdays from 7pm, and welcomes new members.

Cross-country

THE following children represented Tondu Primary School at the recent inter primary schools cross-country competition at Brynteg Comprehensive School: George Barry, Imogen Merrett, Tia Richards, Jacob Waterman and Emily Williamson.

Pupils who took part in the football festival at Pencoed were Owain Hopkins, Kieran O'Connor, Joshua Payne, ChristopherWilliams, Iestyn Williamson, Bobby Zziwa.

Christmas concerts: nursery (Heol Persondy) December 9 at 10am; foundation concerts (Meadow Street) classes Cynffig, Ewenni, Garw, December 14 at 2pm and December 15 at 10am; years 3/4 concerts (classes Llynfi, Ogwr, Rhondda) December 14 at 6pm and December 15 at 2pm; years 5/6 concerts (classes Taf, Tawe, Usk) December 15 at 6pm and December 16 at 2pm.

Christmas gift boxes for the needy

DUE to great support from Operation Christmas Child volunteers, we have processed 22,000 gift shoe boxes in double quick time – which means we do not need evening openings this week (December 1, 2 or 3).

Also, Saturday December 5 is cancelled.

It looks like we may top 25,000 boxes donated this year, but there is still time to donate your box until December 4; please get in touch if you still have boxes to donate.

Many thanks to all – a fantastic effort!

Latest figures: estimated boxes in, 24,158; already sent to Kyrgyzstan, 8,300; already sent to Romania, 8,482; packed for Belarus so far, 5,824; total packed so far, 22,606; boxes still to check and pack, 1,552; estimated boxes still to come in, 500.

Tony McCarthy.

PACT meetings in Bridgend

LITCHARD, PENDRE and COITY PACT at Litchard Mission, Litchard on Thursday, December 3 at 4.30pm.

NEWCASTLE PACT and CEFN GLAS, LLANGEWYDD and BRYNHYFRYD PACT at Westward Community Centre on Monday, December 7 at 6.30pm.

BRYNTIRION, LALESTON and MERTHYR MAWR PACT at Laleston Gardening Club, Laleston on Thursday, December 10 at 7pm.

REST BAY and NOTTAGE PACT at Nottage Scout Hall, Nottage on Tuesday, December 15 at 8pm.

MORFA TOWN PACT at Penybont Primary School, Minerva Street on Monday, January 4 at 6.30pm.

PORTHCAWL EAST CENTRAL PACT at Porthcawl Fire Station, Porthcawl on Tuesday, January 12 at 7pm.

MORFA WILDMILL PACT at The Community Life Centre, The Precinct, Wildmill on Thursday, January 14 at 2pm.

NEWTON PACT at Newton School Rooms, Newton on Tuesday, January 19 at 6.30pm.

OLDCASTLE PACT at The Library, Brynteg Comprehensive School on Wednesday, January, 27 at 6.30pm.

BRACKLA PACT at Brackla Junior School, Brackla Way ons January 28 at 6.30pm.

Changing faces at Bridgend Male Choir

BRIDGEND Male Choir chairman, John Gould, has decided not to stand for re-election at the 2015 AGM, after four years in the role, plus 11 as vice-chairman.

He always planned to serve again on the choir's general committee as a 'back bencher' where he could add to debate, bringing with him his long experience since joining the choir in 1988.

Succeeding John in the chairman's role is Bryncethin-born former vice-president, Gareth J Davies who had faithfully supported John for the past two years when in the VC position. Known best to supporters as the choir's compere, Gareth looks forward to leading the choristers into 2016.

In turn, Gareth has the support of a new face at the choir leadership team after Geraint L Jones was voted into the vice-chairman position.

Other new faces to join the team are Peter K Morgan (assistant secretary) and on general committee, Russell Lewis and Huw Jones. Re-elected into their posts are Gareth J Reese (secretary); David Thomas (treasurer); Michael J Price (assistant treasurer); David T Burt (media/communications; Alun Guile and Alun Roberts Jones (both registrars). Committee: Mansel Abrahamm, current assistant secretary, Tim O'Hagan and committee members Brian C Lewis and Roger Price did not seek re-election. All were thanked for their past contributions to the success of the choir.

DB

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COMPANY SPONSORS CAROLS IN THE CASTLE

Dad thanks employer for its Christmas gift

Pictured: Lewis with rugby star Ryan Jones at an event organised by Tŷ Hafan

A father-of-two whose son has a life-limiting condition has thanked his employer for giving an early Christmas gift to the hospice that cares for his family.

Ian Reiffer, operations assurance manager at Arriva Trains Wales, regularly attends the Tŷ Hafan children's hospice in Sully with his son Lewis, 16, who was diagnosed with a severe form of epilepsy when he was just a few months old.

As part of an ongoing partnership, Ian's employer Arriva Trains Wales sponsored Tŷ Hafan's Carols at the Castle concert at Cardiff Castle on November 26.

Ian said: "Lewis has Lennox Gastaut Syndrome. He was developing well as a baby, then when he was four months old he started having small seizures.

"After lots of tests the consultant told us the spasms were very serious and Lewis had a severe form of epilepsy, which had caused damage to his brain.

"Now Lewis is 16 but mentally he's probably one or two years old. He can't communicate but he's a lovely kid, very happy.

"We tend to have a long weekend break at Tŷ Hafan. It's great – Lewis lights up every time he goes there. He loves the sensory play room and the pool.

"His sister Lauryn used to go to the siblings' group every month but she's got a very busy schedule these days!"

For the last couple of years Ian and his colleagues have organised a bike ride from Holyhead to Cardiff to raise money for Tŷ Hafan, raising £2,500 this year. So he was thrilled to learn that his bosses had agreed to sponsor this year's carol concert.

"It's fantastic. I'm really chuffed that we've got to this stage. It started with the bike rides and we've been building the relationship with Tŷ Hafan since then.

"It's an important part of the community and community work is really important to us at Arriva.

"The support I get from my employer is unreal. It's a lifeline really. I couldn't wish for a better company. If the school phones me to say Lewis isn't well, I can just go – no questions asked. They understand."

Tŷ Hafan business and community fundraiser Eleanor Leyshon said: "We're thrilled that Arriva Trains Wales chose to sponsor Carols in the Castle.

"We can't wait to kick-start the festive season with our carol concert and are looking forward to further developing our relationship with Arriva over the next year."

Rob Philips, finance director for Arriva Trains Wales, said: "We were delighted to be able to support such a good local charity this Christmas, and with lots of Arriva Trains Wales staff attending the Christmas concert too – it was a perfect way to get us all in the Christmas mood!"

Dave's double in annual photo club competition

Dave Jones received a trophy for the digital section and for the print section!

THE Pyle & Porthcawl Photographic Society held their annual club competition on November 26, at the Glamorgan Holiday Hotel in Porthcawl.

It was split into two sections – prints and digital images, with a trophy for each.

Each member could enter up to two images into each competition. Dennis Russ judged both competitions, and not only awarded the points, but also provided an excellent critique on each image.

In the print section, four prints achieved maximum points (20); 'Ironed Out' and 'Little and Large' by Dave Jones, 'Boulders' by Geoff Baker and 'Brief Encounter' by Jeff Evans.

The eventual winner was Dave Jones for 'Ironed Out'. There were also four prints with 19 points from Geoff Baker, Ken Needs, Martyn Derbyshire and Richard Craze. Three prints scored 18 points – from Geoff Sherriff, Martyn Derbyshire and Richard Craze.

In the digital section the winner was 'Little Interest' by Dave Jones. Second place with 19 points was 'The Flyer' by Jeff Evans. There were also eight images that scored 18 points for third place – from David Morgan, Celia Madge, Geoff Baker, Geoff Sherriff, Glyn Edmunds, Patricia Kendrick and Richard Craze.

Congratulations to Dave on his well-deserved win in both sections and a big thank you to all who participated, for making it such an interesting and entertaining evening.

GLYN EDMUNDS

'Little and Large', which won the print section.

'Little Interest' by Dave Jones.

POST HASTE FOR CHRISTMAS!

BRIDGEND MP Madeleine Moon has visited Royal Mail's Bridgend delivery office – to pass on Christmas wishes and encouragement to the postmen and women at their busiest time of the year.

She was met by local Royal Mail delivery office manager Stephen Davies, and introduced to postmen and women, who were working hard to sort and deliver mail in the Bridgend area in the run-up to Christmas.

Speaking after her visit, the MP said: "It was good to meet the hardworking Royal Mail postmen and women at Bridgend delivery office and to see at first hand just how much effort they put into delivering for people at this time of year.

"Already, the mail is building up. They do such an important job and I am keen to thank them for their efforts and wish them all the best over this busy period."

Stephen Davies said: "Christmas is the busiest time of year for Royal Mail.

"Our people pull out all the stops throughout the year to ensure mail is delivered quickly, but even more so over the busy festive period. We are pleased that Madeleine came along to see the hard work that goes on behind the scenes."

He added: "Our people do a fantastic job at this time of year to ensure that friends and families stay in touch through their Christmas greetings and gifts.

...And as usual, we'd like to remind our customers to post early, so that friends and family have longer to enjoy their Christmas greetings!"

The recommended last posting dates for mail are: Monday, December 21 for 1st class items; Saturday, December 19 for 2nd class items, and Wednesday, December 23 for Special Delivery items.

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MP 'paired' with a top scientist in Commons!

A scientist from Cardiff, Theo Tryfonas, swapped his lab bench for the green benches – when he joined Bridgend MP, Madeleine Moon, in Parliament last week.

Madeleine Moon MP with scientist, Theo Tryfonas.

Mrs Moon met up with Theo as part of a unique scheme run by the Royal Society – the UK's national academy of science, with support from the Government Office for Science, which pairs scientists with politicians and civil servants.

He was able to get an insight into how policy is formed and how research can be used to make evidence-based decisions.

The MP explained: "In Parliament, I need to make decisions on complex topics. Building links with the UK's top scientists helps me access scientific advice so that I can make decisions based on the best evidence available.

"Meeting expert scientists from all over the UK ,is a great reminder that the UK is a world leader in science. We should use the expertise of our brightest scientists to provide evidence for policy making.

"It was great to meet Theo and learn about his area of expertise, which is cyber security. I'm looking forward to getting hands-on experience of how Theo works when I visit him in his workplace early in 2016."

ESTATE AGENT IN TRAINING FOR CYCLE CHALLENGE

A LOCAL estate agent is committed to spending many hours in the saddle next year, as he trains for a charity cycle challenge that will take him up into the Rocky Mountains, *writes PHILIP IRWIN*.

Philip Thomas (left) receives the cheque from Adam Llewellyn, the chairman of the Glamorgan Grassland Society.

Philip Thomas of Herbert R Thomas (HRT) estate agents has for 17 years been secretary to the Glamorgan Grassland Society, which holds its monthly meetings at The Duke of Wellington in Cowbridge.

On relinquishing his position, he was presented with a cheque for £250 in appreciation of his services and the society asked that it be on donated to the 'Ride the Rockies 2016' campaign to raise funds for Velindre Hospital.

Philip told The GEM: "I have put my name down to "Ride the Rockies" to raise as much money as I can for Velindre Hospital in Cardiff, so I shall have to step up my training to be in shape by September next year.

"By then I will be a 50-year-old saddo in lycra!"

Philip does have a personal reason for helping Velindre. He explained: "Sadly, I lost my sister-in-law, Helen, last year, after she lost her hard-fought and courageous battle to cancer.

"She was a Cowbridge girl, one of five sisters from Pendoylan and she went to Cowbridge Comprehensive.

"Helen has left behind her 40-year-old husband, Nic and their two super girls, Alice and Izzy.

"She was treated in Velindre Hospital, who helped her in her fight and provided the most outstanding care and support.

"Her husband, Nic, has done this year's Iron Man in Tenby and I will be joining him, and one of Helen's brothers-in-law, on the 400 km ride across The Rockies from Canmore to Jasper."

Philip has been getting some training in this year, joining Nic for the cycle part of his triathlons.

To support Philip's cause, log on to Just Donate at https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/philipthomas1

Organ donation: new law in place

AS from December 1, unless people specifically opt out from organ donation, it will be presumed that they have given their consent.

Bridgend AM and First Minister Carwyn Jones is urging people to tell their loved ones about their decision, so that they can make sure it is respected.

"Since the Act was passed in 2013, there has been a great deal of work undertaken to prepare for this fundamental change, including extensive advertising on TV, radio and on social media," he said.

People need to be over 18 years of age and have lived in Wales for more than 12 months for deemed consent to apply. People will be treated as a donor unless they have registered a decision not to be a donor.

Thus, if people have not registered a clear preference, namely opted in or opted out, then they will be treated as having no objection to being an organ donor, and this will be deemed consent.

Wales is the first country in the UK to introduce this 'soft opt-out system' for organ and tissue donation. The Welsh Government hopes that this legislation will lead to a 25 per cent rise in the number of organ donors in Wales.

The First Minister added: "By legislating and moving to presumed consent, the aim is to increase the number of potential organ donors and ultimately increase the number of organs available for transplant.

The law will clarify your organ donation decisions so that your loved ones can ensure t they are carried out.

"It will also offer hope to those people across Wales whose lives are on hold while they await a new organ".

Visit www.organdonationwales.org for further information".

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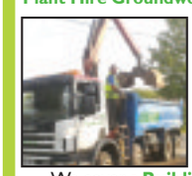

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Poppy Appeal's display opens the window on past

by PHILIP IRWIN

A family photo of Evan Thomas David, the 'boy soldier' which was made available as a result of the Cowbridge Poppy displays.

The Poppy in Llanblethian that remembered Evan Thomas David.
(Photo by Mike Wilcock).

THE large poppies fixed to the lamp posts in neighbouring Cowbridge and Llanblethian during this year's Poppy Appeal produced much favourable comment from visitors.

In fact, it is quite likely that other communities will look to do the same thing next year.

However, another spin-off from the displays was the emergence of more information about one of the Llanblethian men who were remembered in this way – including a family photograph!

The niece of one of the men who lost his life during WW1 contacted Poppy Appeal organiser David Howell and they shared the information they had about him.

Mr Howell said: "It revealed a poignant story of how, what may have started as a big adventure, turned into a tragedy. It is very moving and we felt we should share it with the people of Cowbridge".

Evan Thomas David was born in Llanblethian in mid 1898. He was the elder of two sons, and two daughters, of David and Elma David.

The family lived at various homes in Llanblethian when Tom was a child and at the time the 1911 census, lived near Kingscombe Farm. Young Tom, at this time 12 years of age, was described as a butcher's helper.

War was declared in August 1914 and Lord Kitchener immediately put out a call for men to enlist. The feeling in the country at the time was almost one of euphoria, recruitment was in full swing across the country and the general opinion was that the war would be over by Christmas.

Tom must have lied about his age as he was only 15 and "signed on," for the Welsh Regiment in the autumn of 1914; his mother is said to have been extremely unhappy about the situation.

His name was included in the Glamorgan Gazette's Roll of Honour for October 23, 1914, of Cowbridge men who had enlisted (T E David).

After a short training period, he was sent to war in France on February 17, 1915, still not having celebrated his 16th birthday. On May 9, 1915, Tom, by now aged 16, was in action at the infamous Ypres, Belgium, where he was both wounded and gassed.

He returned home to convalesce, but only for a short time, as he was sent back to war in France in October 1915; by now still only 17 years old.

He was invalided home with pleurisy in April 1916, almost certainly caused by the gassing he suffered, and discharged from the army in August the same year.

He was nursed by his mother at home in Llanblethian but succumbed to his injuries and died at home on April 4, 1917, just 18 years of age.

A report in the Glamorgan Gazette (April 13, 1917) refers to the burial of Tom David in Llanblethian Church, confirming his age as only 18, and describes him as "been through the thick of it ....home from the front, suffering from shrapnel wounds as well as being gassed."

His funeral is said to have been "very well attended".

Tom was interred at Llanblethian Church and a white cross to his memory is still behind the choir stall on the south side of the chancel of the church. His grave, which he shares with his father, is to the west of the church. Tom was awarded posthumously the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Tom's story is one of the short and very tragic life, of what can only be described as a "boy soldier".

A closer examination of the fallen of Cowbridge and Llanblethian reveals that Tom may not have been the only 'boy soldier'.

Mr Howell said: "At least four other boys of about Tom's age, William Morgan Jenkins, David Miles, David Robert Bond and William Henry Williams, all of whom who lived in Llanblethian or the Westgate end of Cowbridge, all signed up at in autumn 1914.

"It is likely they knew one another, and it does not require a great leap of imagination to envisage them discussing the war, signing up and embarking on a 'great adventure'.

"What has been revealed in Tom's story will help us remember the fallen of Cowbridge and Llanblethian."

If you have any information about any of the men on the Cowbridge and Llanblethian war memorials, please contact Poppy Appeal organiser David Howell on01446 774306.

Porthcawl is hoping for great Christmas Swim

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ian added: "The main aim, of course, is to raise as much money as possible for our chosen charities, so we are relying on the public to help, either by swimming and getting sponsorship to support us, or by giving generously to our bucket collection.

"We are also appealing for the volunteers to support us as collectors and marshals. Details of how to register an interest can be found on our website."

The chairman, Nicola Willis, said: "This year, the committee have chosen to donate money collected at the swim and via sponsorship to Porthcawl RNLI, who are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year.

"As in previous years, we will also support some other local organisations too. Our promise is to give every penny that is collected on Christmas morning via the bucket collection and through swimmer's sponsorship to our chosen beneficiaries.

"Sponsorship forms are available from our website - *www.christmasswim.org* – or at the Town Council Offices, Jane's Cards John Street and Porthcawl Library.

"We were overwhelmed by the way the event was so well supported on our 50th year; we had record swimmers, spectators and collections.

"Help us to make the 51st event equally successful."

NOTE: The Christmas Morning Swim Committee hold the license to collect money on Christmas Day, therefore any collecting or raising of money at the event, other than by official collectors, is prohibited.

Roman coins and medieval rings declared as treasure

A HOARD of Roman silver coins and two medieval finger rings have been declared as treasure by HM Coroner for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Roman silver coins were discovered by Mr Richard Annear and Mr John Player while metal detecting in a field at Wick in the Vale of Glamorgan on December 13, 2014.

The coins were found partly scattered by previous ploughing and the finders left the undisturbed portion in the ground before reporting the finds to Mark Lodwick, co-ordinator of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Wales (PAS Cymru) and archaeological curators at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

This allowed museum staff to lift it intact for detailed excavation in the museum laboratory.

The find comprises 91 Roman silver denarii (coins) which were buried in a locally-made pot. The coins date from the period of Emperor Nero (AD 54-68) to Marcus Aurelius (161-80) and the latest coin was struck in 163-4; 14 emperors and empresses are represented.

The hoard also contained three coins issued by Mark Antony in 31 BC, still in circulation after nearly 200 years.

Edward Besly, numismatist at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales said: "Each coin represents about a day's pay at the time, so the hoard represents a significant sum of money.

"The hoard's find spot is only a mile (1.6 km) as the crow flies from that of another second century silver hoard found at Monknash in 2000, which comprised 103 denarii, buried a little earlier, around 150. Together the hoards point to a prosperous coin-using economy in the area in the middle of the second century."

The two medieval rings were found in Llancarfan in the Vale of Glamorgan by Mr David Harrison in December 2013.

The silver finger ring in the form of a decorated band, tapering away from bezel. The decoration, which extends all along the external face, has been first engraved and then inlaid with niello (now only partially preserved, but represented by dark material in parts of the engraved design). The ring is of 12th century date. Parallels include one from the Lark Hill hoard, Worcester (buried c. 1173-4).

The gold decorative ring has a repeating pattern of alternating half-flowers filling triangular panels, separated by a deep zig-zag moulding and considered to be of the late 15th century.

Dr Mark Redknap from the Department of History and Archaeology, National Museum Wales, said: 'These are finger rings from different centuries; one 12th century and the other 15th century, reflecting different traditions of fine metalworking, which are important indicators of changing fashions in south Wales during the medieval period'.

Additional finds from the area declared treasure today include: a 15-16th century silver pendant and a 17th century silver gilt finger ring from Penllyn, Vale of Glamorgan; a 15th-16th century silver finger ring from Llancarfan; a 13th-14th century silver brooch from Llancarfan; an early 18th century gold finger ring from Rhoose; a late Bronze Age hoard from Penllyn and a late Bronze Age hoard from Pentyrch, Cardiff.

The treasure items will be acquired by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales supported by grant funding provided through the Saving Treasures; Telling Stories Heritage Lottery funded project.

Great archaeological discoveries from around the world and the big screen will be on display in a major new exhibition Treasures: Adventures in Archaeology at National Museum Cardiff from January 26 – October 30.

To celebrate 2016, Year of Adventure in Wales, the Museum will host extraordinary gems from popular culture including the hat, whip and jacket of Indiana Jones, crystal skulls and Inca Gold alongside early finds such as Egyptian Mummies.

Progress report on Swansea Bay's tidal lagoon project

ON Wednesday, December 9, in Porthcawl, Louise Strack, the development manager for Tidal Lagoon Power, will be presenting a short summary and progress to date report on the Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay project.

At 320MW installed capacity, Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon aims to be the largest marine energy development in the world, and the event is hosted by Sustainable Wales, the Porthcawl-based environmental charity.

Margaret Minhinnick, of Sustainable Wales, said: "A £1billion infrastructure project developed by Tidal Lagoon Power Limited, it will have an entirely predictable 495GWh output each year of clean, green electricity and will power more than 155,000 homes for 120 years – that's about 11 per cent of Wales' domestic electricity. "

The venue is above SUSSED, 4/5 James Street, Porthcawl CF 36 3BG, on December9, at 7pm.

Mum will run for cancer charity

A Bridgend mother-of-two is starting training for next year's London Marathon as she aims to raise £2,000 for Children with Cancer UK.

The first fundraising event is on Friday, December 11, and is a Christmas charity present wrapping session in Manuca Deli in Broadlands, starting at 9.15am.

Sarah Gardner is 43 and lives in Broadlands.

She told The GEM: "After having a dreadful scare with my seven-year-old eldest son – and then receiving the best possible news – I decided to raise money for those who are not so lucky.

"Believe me, I count my blessings every day. I just wanted to do something for families who get such devastating news."

Sarah's fundraising page can be found on: http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/sarah-gardner-SAVMLMBONDS3332016-4159

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Homework Club celebrates Solid Foundations!

Aberthaw Cement plant manager Chris Bradbury presents Dylan James with his award.

RHOOSE Homework Club – now renamed Solid Foundations – has held its annual awards ceremony, recognising the efforts of Vale children to improve their skills and to help them reach their full potential.

It is run by volunteers and holds English and maths support sessions, while helping older family members with adult learning support.

Tarmac's Aberthaw Cement Plant supported the awards evening, where some 65 awards were presented.

A founder member, Cath Watkins, said: "It's fantastic to see where the club has come to over three years. We started supporting a handful of local children in Rhoose with specific learning difficulties and now we support over 90 children and adults across the Vale."

A special presentation of the Tarmac Child of the Year Award was made to 10-year-old Dylan James from Rhoose, who was presented with the award by Tarmac's Aberthaw Cement plant manager, Chris Bradbury.

"This is the first year of our community partnership with Solid Foundations and we are delighted to be part of such a wonderful organisation that is growing from strength to strength in its work to help local children and their families," he said.

"It was great to hear how well the children are doing and to present the Tarmac Child of the Year Award to Dylan. He won the award for his hard work in improving his maths and English - always asking for extra work and also always ready to help other children.

"He helps out with anything that needs doing at the club and always does it with a smile – very well deserved, Dylan."

Solid Foundations meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays during school term time at the Rhoose Community Centre.

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
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www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

TV presenter hosts Leekes' charity auction

THE TV presenter and antiques dealer Paul Martin will be appearing at the Llantrisant store of Leekes, to host a charity auction in aid of the NSPCC tonight, December 3 from 6pm - 9pm with Paul scheduled from 7pm.

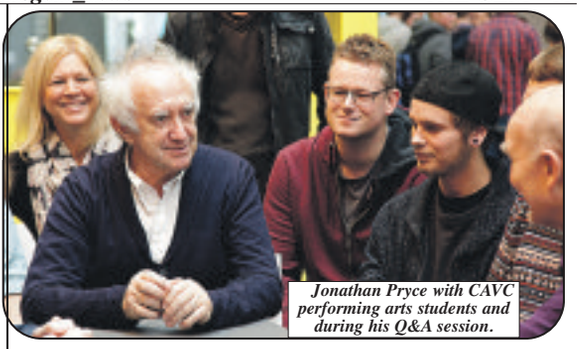
As part of the auction, a selection of high and low value items, donated by suppliers of Leekes, will be going under the hammer for this great cause.

This includes a Hypnos single divan bed, a Caple wine cabinet and a selection of homewares from leading brands including Le Creuset and Dyson.

Peter Mundell, store manager at Leekes Llantrisant, said: "It's great to be welcoming such a well-known TV personality to our store and one so used to the auction environment.

"We hope that, with his experience, we will generate plenty of offers from our customers to provide funds for our nominated charity, the NSPCC."

TV presenter and antiques dealer Paul Martin will be hosting the Leekes auction in aid of the NSPCC.



Jonathan Pryce with CAVC performing arts students and during his Q&A session.

Welsh star's journey from Holywell to Hollywood

WELSH movie star, Jonathan Pryce, recently visited the Cardiff and Vale College to give a talk to performing arts students describing his journey from Holywell to Hollywood.

Pryce, who has appeared in numerous movies including *Brazil, Tomorrow Never Dies* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, recently playing the High Sparrow in *Game of Thrones*, took part in a Q&A session. The session was organised by Into Film and hosted by Bafta Cymru award winning actor/director Celyn Jones.

Addressing an audience of 50 CAVC performing arts students and a further 50 from local schools, the actor talked about growing up in north Wales and getting into theatre.

Pryce also delivered an entertaining series of anecdotes about his life on stage and screen, and working with household names such as Terry Gilliam, Al Pacino and Martin Scorsese.

"You've got to work," Pryce told the next generation of Welsh talent. "Education does matter and it helps you build your craft. After all, if you cannot read a script, what can you do?"

JOIN AGE CONNECTS FOR CHRISTMAS LUNCH!

RECOGNISING that for many, it is a time that reinforces feelings of loneliness, on December 25 Age Connects Cardiff and the Vale, alongside Glamorgan Voluntary Services are putting on a lunch at Bethel Baptist Church in Llantwit Major.

Starting at 12pm with a harpist to greet you on arrival, there will be a three-course meal, with festive carols, a visit from Father Christmas, finishing with the traditional Queen's speech and a glass of bubbly.

They can also provide transport.

"There are no costs involved, we just want you to come and enjoy lunch with us on Christmas Day; the only requirement is that you are over 60, and would otherwise be on your own. Places are limited," a spokesman said.

For further information, contact** jane.platts@ageconnectscardiff.org.uk **or call Jane Platts on 01446 795631.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Branch Manager Phil Powell feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. *'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'*

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Phil a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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PHOTO CLUB'S TRIBUTE TO 'GENTLEMAN TONY'

TONY LEADBITTER.

IT is with great sadness that this month the Vale Photographic Club reports the passing of one of its most senior members – Tony Leadbitter.

Tony had been a keen and active supporter of the club for longer than any of us can recollect. He also worked as a photographer for The GEM during his retirement, happy to use his skills for the good of the community.

His enthusiasm was clear, and consistently provided encouragement and inspiration to all, no matter what their ability. He will be greatly missed.

Longstanding friend and member of the club, Mike Baker, has also paid this tribute:

"I first met Tony through his son's cycle shop in Cowbridge, but it didn't take long to find that we had some common interests. They were Hi-Fi and photography and we often spoke at length on each topic.

"This was about 25 years ago, and gradually I found out more about his own career, which took him from the Post Office, as it was then, into GCHQ and then onward to become managing director of Woolsey Electronics.

"Tony was a gentleman, in all senses of the word. He was a judge on the Welsh photographic circuit and to my knowledge, was never destructively critical of our photographic efforts; always giving praise and encouragement whenever possible.

"In recent years, he suffered from several health problems, but nevertheless continued to join us at our Friday meetings in Ystradowen for as long as he possibly could – usually with the help of his daughter, Fiona, and also club member Jim Thomas. He will be missed by all who knew him."

For information about the club, please visit the website at www.vale-photographic-club.co.uk. The club meets every Friday from September to July at 7.15pm in the Ystradowen village hall.

Andrew Coleman

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Celebrating 27 Years

Students' open a 'Secret House' on college site

ABOVE: Tutor Pam Scott, students Sophia Aspin, Samuel Halendby-Robertson, and Matthew Bowley; tutor Helen McAndrew, head of independent living skills Tom Snelgrove and skills for progression tutor Lauren Rowe.

STUDENTS on the preparation for work and life skills courses at Cardiff and Vale College recently organised a special opening party for Ty Cudd (Secret House).

The students on the skills for progression course will now be based at Ty Cudd, which was once a caretaker's bungalow on the Colcot Road site in Barry.

It aims to help develop personal and social skills alongside providing a grounding for transition to Level-1 vocational study for learners who require more support.

A series of improvements has been carried out on the building, including a kitchen refit where students have catering lessons, the creation of a classroom with computers, a common room an d a quiet room.

The bungalow's garden has also been given an make-over.

Event manager student Tristan Perratt said: "It's been a fun day. There was not much here before – we only had one computer. It's much better now."

GWANGWYN GRANT

READERS can get involved in a Wales-wide Gwangwyn arts festival for over-50s next May, by applying for a Gwangwyn community grant to organise an arts event, which could be painting or photography classes, music, drama or storytelling workshops or art exhibitions.

Visit *www.gwanwyn.org.uk* and click the 'Funding' tab. You can also request a pack by calling Age Cymru on 029 2043 1555.

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Ambulance Service exceeds its target

ALMOST 70 per cent of people with life-threatening illnesses and injuries, received an emergency response within eight minutes during the first month of a year-long pilot to test changes to the Welsh Ambulance Service, new figures published reveal.

A third of people (34.7 per cent) received a response within just four minutes, the figures show.

The figures for October – the first month of the new clinical response model – show the Welsh Ambulance Service has met and exceeded the target that 65 per cent of responses to the most life-threatening emergencies should arrive within eight minutes.

A total of 68.7 per cent red calls were responded to within eight minutes. The average response time to this type of call was five minutes and 44 seconds.

The figures show: The Welsh Ambulance service received 38,155 emergency calls in October 2015, an average of 1,231 a day.

Of these, 1,877 (5 per cent) were immediately life-threatening (red) emergency calls; 68.7 per cent (1,267) responses arrived within eight minutes, above the target of 65 per cent. 74 per cent of red calls were responded to in nine minutes; 78.9 per cent within 10 minutes.

Deputy Health Minister Vaughan Gething said: "The figures published today show the new system is working, with nearly 70 per cent of the most immediately life-threatening calls to the Welsh Ambulance Service receiving a response within eight minutes.

"I want to pay tribute to the ambulance service's hard-working frontline clinicians, volunteer first responders and clinical contact centre staff for their dedication and commitment.

"Their work embracing the new clinical response model is crucial to delivering better outcomes for patients."

Tracey Myhill, chief executive of the Welsh Ambulance Service, said: "We're grateful to staff for embracing this new way of working, and to the people of Wales for their patience and understanding while we continue to improve."

Christmas at Dyffryn House

THE Vale is invited to step back in time with the National Trust and enjoy a traditional Christmas with all the trappings.

At Dyffryn Gardens visitors can not only expect the house and gardens to be dressed to festive perfection, but can really get into the spirit at a series of carol concerts taking place throughout the month (December 4, 11 and 18, 7pm).

Singing is optional but with mince pies and a glass of bubbly and the beautifully decorated Great Hall as the backdrop, it will be enough to put even the biggest Scrooge among us in the Christmas mood.

Father Christmas will be stopping by to meet little ones and give them a very special gift chosen just for them (December 5 /6 and 12/13).

For more information about National Trust Wales events, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out.

Amelia Trust's marquee fair a festive success

THE Amelia Trust Farm's Christmas fair was held at the Cottrell Park Golf Resort's all-weather marquee in a festive atmosphere, as shoppers browsed a wide range of crafts and goods.

Youngsters were kept entertained by animals from the Nearly Wild Show and Vale Owls.

There was a visit from Father Christmas and children were able to have a go at cake decorating, Christmas crafts and also skipping rope making with the Cowbridge Scout Group.

Visitors were treated to a live performance of festive songs and carols by Cathays Methodist Community Choir, while they tucked into homemade cakes and mince pies made and served by volunteers of the Amelia Trust Farm.

The day was a huge success and raised much-needed funds to enable the farm to continue its work supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. A big thank you goes out to everyone who supported the event.

Volunteers sought

Amelia Trust is currently recruiting for volunteers to join its general maintenance, administration and weekend animal care teams.

***To find out more, contact Jo Whitfield on 01446 782030, or email** jow@ameliatrust.org.uk*

JW

Lucky tickets!

IF anyone has a strip of green raffle tickets numbered 66-70; you have won a prize...

Bring the tickets to the office at Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg, Barri.

The juniors' Christmas service will be held on December 15 and 16 at Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge.

OS oes gan unrhyw un stribed tocynnau rafflgwyrdd rhif 66-70; mae gwobr ar gael. Dewch a'r tocynnau i'r swyddfa.

Cynhelir gwasanaeth yr adran iau ar foreau'r 15 a'r 16 o Ragfyr yn Eglwys y Groes Sanctaidd Y Bont-Faen.

Lib Dem leader backs Marie Curie campaign

LEADER of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Kirsty Williams AM, is backing a Marie Curie campaign calling for the right for everyone to have palliative care when they need it.

Marie Curie lead nurse Carolyn Gent gives Kirsty Williams AM a tour of the hospice.

On a visit to Penarth on November 27, she said: "It was a privilege to be able to attend the Marie Curie hospice today and learn more about the work of this important charity.

"From speaking to patients and their families, it was clear that the charity's staff, both in the hospice and out in the community, provide truly outstanding care and support for people living with a terminal illness.

"I am happy to support the charity's campaign to ensure that people who need palliative care services don't miss out at the time when they need that care the most."

The campaign comes as Marie Curie revealed that half of people over the age of 50 in Wales, of whom there are 1.2 million, are not confident that they will get the care they need towards the end of their life.

One in four people each year who need palliative care, miss out on it because their needs are not recognised and they are not referred on to the right services.

Marie Curie is calling on the Welsh Government to build on the good work already done to improve access to high quality palliative and end of life care for everyone with a terminal illness.

If you, or someone you're close to, has a terminal illness, call the Marie Curie Support Line on 0800 090 2309, Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm; or visit mariecurie.org.uk/help

You can also talk to people in a similar situation in the Marie Curie community.

Age Connects fair a success

AGE Connects Cardiff and Vale Senior Health Shop held a very successful Christmas fayre at the Civic Offices opened by the Mayor of the Vale, Coun Fred Johnson.

A prize draw had over 20 prizes donated by local businesses, including Manor House, New Theatre, Head Office hairdressers, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Macdonalds, and Roy's Toys.

The fair raised £513.33, all of which will be used for the benefit of the Age Connects Senior Health Shop in Barry.

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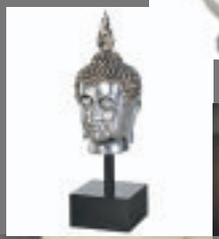

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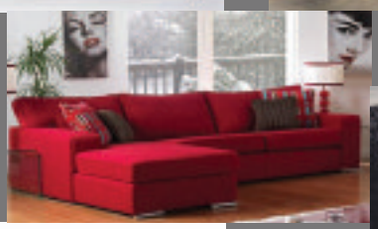

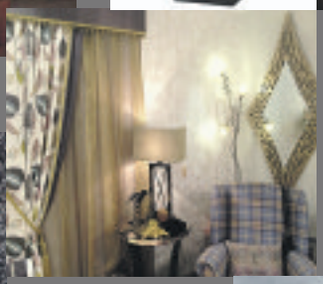

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Like

Rotary competition for young singers tests eminent judges

ABOVE: the winner, Charlotte Bonney.

The Rotary Young Vocalist singers.

RIGHT: Iona Jones, David Rogers and Dyfed Wyn Jones.

THE club and area Rotary Young Vocalist competition was held in Cowbridge Comprehensive School on the evening of Thursday, November 26.

This annual event, organised by Llantwit Major Rotary club, showcases fabulous young local talent and this year we were joined by competitors sponsored by the Neath and Swansea Valley Rotary clubs in what proved to be a wonderful evening's entertainment.

Third prizewinner was Annie Phillips, a student at Cefn Saeson School, Neath, who sang 'Cry Me a River' by Arthur Hamilton, followed by 'Once Upon a Dream' from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde*.

The second prize went to Trystan Watkins, who sang 'Amarillo Mia Bella' by Caccini and 'The Sky Above the Roof' by Vaughan Williams. Trystan is a student at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Swansea Valley.

The first prize went to Cowbridge Comprehensive student, Charlotte Bonney, who sang two jazz standards with great feeling and skill, 'My Funny Valentine' by Rodgers and Hart; followed by 'Take the A Train' by Billy Strayhorn.

We were fortunate to have two eminent professional singers as judges: Iona Jones, the well-known soprano who is also honorary president of Cowbridge Male Voice Choir. Dyfed Wyn Jones is an experienced baritone who often sings with the Welsh National Opera.

They had the difficult task of choosing the three winners, and provided valuable feedback for each of the 15 contestants.

Llantwit Major Rotary club president, Dr David Rogers, commended the contestants on their talent and wished first prizewinner Charlotte Bonney luck in the District 1150 final, which will be held in Cowbridge Comprehensive on Saturday, February 27.

This district includes clubs from across south and mid Wales. **TC**

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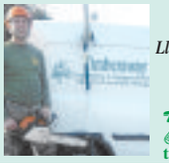

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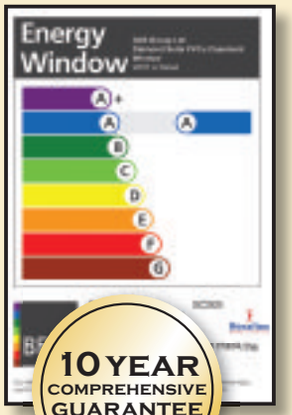

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The cast of Aladdin at the New Theatre.

THE New Theatre will follow up last year's successful panto *Cinderella* with *Aladdin*, from December 12 to January 17.

Joining last year's record-breaking cast is Ian 'H' Watkins from Steps, who plays Aladdin, along with actor and model Linda Lusardi, who plays the Slave of the Ring.

Also returning will be comedians and panto veterans Mike Doyle (as Widow Twankey) and Andy Jones (as Wishee Washee).

Sam Kane, is not only playing ultimate pantomime baddie Abanazar, but he directs the production too.

Welsh rugby legend Gareth Thomas makes only his second panto appearance as the Genie of the Lamp. The Princess is played by Holly Bluett.

Tickets (£10.50 to £31) from box office 02920 878889 or book online www.newtheatrecardiff.co.uk.

Spielberg's Cold War spy thriller is a classy and engaging affair...

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

GIVEN his strong work ethic, it seems strange to think that Steven Spielberg's last film, *Lincoln*, was nearly three years ago.

While the 'Berg has plenty on his slate in the future (including a take on Roald Dahl's *The BFG*), his current film sees him re-team with Tom Hanks for the third time in *Bridge of Spies*.

A true story, it sees Hanks play James B Donovan, an American lawyer hired to defend Rudolf Abel (Mark Rylance), a Soviet spy who has been caught. While Donovan was initially hired in order to ensure Abel received a fair trial, their relationship deepens, and when American pilot Francis Gary Powers (Austin Stowell) is shot down over Russia, Donovan is recruited to arrange an exchange for Powers with Abel returning home – an exchange that doesn't go as smoothly as hoped...

It seems like something of a foregone conclusion to cast Tom Hanks as a wholly decent American, concerned with doing the morally right thing rather than the perceived right thing, even when it comes at a cost to both him and his family.

However, just because it's a foregone conclusion doesn't mean that the end performance, and indeed product, is anything less than stellar, and so it applies to *Bridge of Spies*, a film that trades on Hanks' (and to some degree Steven Spielberg's) honour and nobility and coalesces into an insightful and powerful film.

It's essentially two separate stories tied in together – the opening half of the film sees Hanks' Donovan coerced into defending Abel despite it being the 'un-American' thing to do; despite doing what's right and just, Donovan discovers that his stand has consequences.

The second half sees Powers shot down over Russia and Donovan brought into the fold to negotiate his release in return for Abel's release and return to the Soviets – one of many wrinkles being that the swap has to take place in East Berlin, and that an American student has found himself captured and held prisoner at the same time.

It feels a little tacked together, Donovan and Abel the bridges between the stories, but within are some deeply tense and moving sequences; as the script subtly indicates, the notion of doing the right thing applies even when other people believe you are doing the wrong thing, and it's the conviction of your beliefs, and how hard you cling onto them even in the face of extreme adversity, that showcases your character.

There are even a few idiosyncratic notes, supplied by the Coen brothers, which deepen and bring the humanity out in the story even more.

This is as close as Hanks may get to play Atticus Finch, but while the similarities between that fictional character and the non-fictional Donovan are perhaps played up for the screen, Hanks' stoic turn is exceptional, the actor rooting the character as a believable one, doing what he feels is right.

It is an archetype in the Hanks canon certainly, but it doesn't lessen the impact of his powerful performance at all.

Opposite him is Mark Rylance, a man more likely to be found on stage rather than screen – although, on the basis of his work here, that may no longer apply as Rylance is an incredible counterpoint to Hanks, their onscreen chemistry well played as the actor brings incredible nuance to Abel, like Donovan a man doing what he believed was right, for his country.

The film pivots on their relationship, even when action switches to freeing Powers and Abel is relegated to occasional cutaway scenes – the characters strongly written and even more strongly portrayed, with an unshowy supporting cast dripping with pedigree solidifying the foundations.

For Spielberg, this mines a similar ground to *Lincoln* in a roundabout way – a man doing what he feels is right and damn the consequences, despite being acutely aware of them – and it follows that film's dialogue-heavy tone.

There are occasional sequences of drama where Spielberg cuts loose (the capture of Abel, a horrifying glimpse into the lengths people went to get over the wall, a tension-filled climax) but his focus is on telling the story, which he does incredibly well.

Quite whether such a prestigious project will get the overwhelming love it deserves – particularly come awards season – will depend on how you view the achievement of *Bridge of Spies*; you could argue that it's Hanks and Spielberg delivering what they're good at – but such skilled filmmaking and strong acting should never be taken for granted.

VERDICT – A gripping, emotionally-involving spy thriller, *Bridge of Spies* sees the all-American Tom Hanks essay an all-American hero in a stylishly shot and executed Steven Spielberg film. With an outstanding turn from Mark Rylance, it is a truly impressive film that more than stands up to the reputations of those involved. Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Schindler's List* (1993), *Unbroken* (2014).

Santa Specials at Barry station

SANTA'S coming to the Barry Island Tourist Railway on the weekends of December 12 to 13 and 19 to 20.

The railway is gearing up to receive him and have commissioned their steam locomotive *Susan*, built in 1952, to haul the Santa Special trains which will run on each of the days at 11.45am, 1.30pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm.

Booking is advisable as the trains are already filling up fast, but there are still some seats available on December 12 and 13. To book, call Kathryn on 02920 511019.

John Buxton, managing director of the railway said: "Visiting the Barry Tourist Railway is a great way to see Santa; there is no queuing as Santa visits every child on the train at their seat and gives each one a quality present. Adults can sample the mulled wine and mince pies afterwards."

There will vintage and wartime Christmas displays at Barry Island station too and craft stalls on some days.

For more information contact John Buxton, Barry Tourist Railway on 01446 748816; john.buxton@cambriantransport.com.

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For more information go to bloodwise.org.uk/event-challenges/do-anything-go-event/wales/cardiff-carol-concert or call the box office on 02920 342854.

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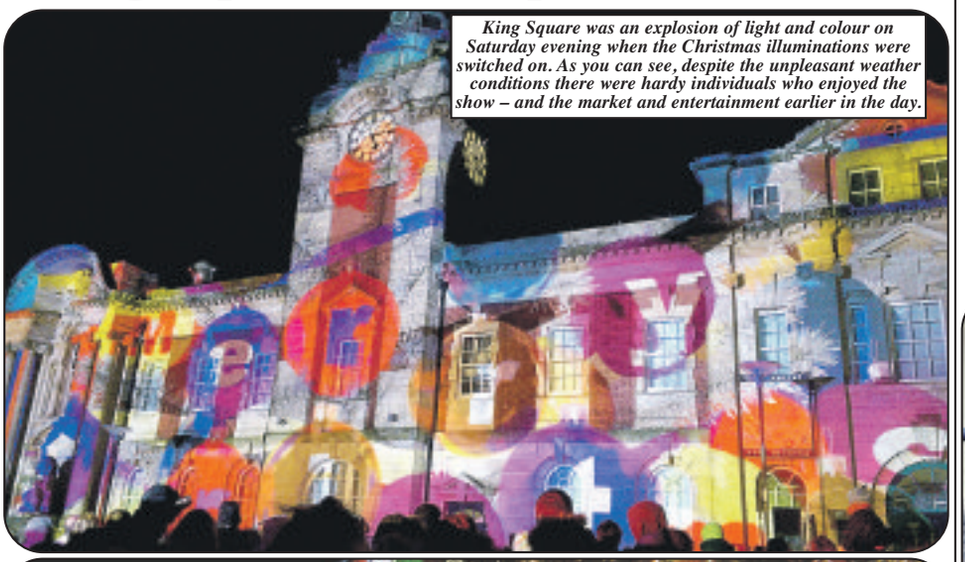

King Square was an explosion of light and colour on Saturday evening when the Christmas illuminations were switched on. As you can see, despite the unpleasant weather conditions there were hardy individuals who enjoyed the show – and the market and entertainment earlier in the day.

Nancy is the special guest at her school – 80 years after starting there!

ABOVE: Nancy opens the new classrooms at Llangan Primary School.

by PHILIP IRWIN

THE special guest at Llangan Primary School last week was a local lady who was a pupil there – over 80 years ago!

The occasion was the much anticipated grand opening of a new classroom base, and it was only fitting that a former pupil (and great friend of the school), Mrs Nancy Davidge was invited to perform the grand opening.

She said: "I was a pupil at Llangan over 80 years ago and in that time I have seen the school develop in so many different ways."

During the summer holidays the school underwent a significant facelift as a new and enlarged kitchen was built, a new air-conditioned double classroom was erected and an existing classroom was refurbished, containing a kitchen for the children, new windows, flooring and toilets to boot!

The new classrooms are a welcome addition to the school which has for a number of years been struggling to 'make do and mend' the pre-existing building.

The headteacher, Mr Steve Williams, said: "The school can now boast a state-of-the-art classroom base which will ensure that the needs of pupils and staff are met for future generations of Llangan children.

"The Vale Council's catering department must also be commended for investing in a new kitchen at Llangan. This means that, for the first time in many years, children, staff and visitors can now enjoy freshly prepared, delicious and nutritious food cooked on site by Mrs Paula Meek, the new school cook in charge.

"The children have given the meals a huge thumbs up. Nearly as many pupils now choose to have a school meal per day as were ordered in a week before the new kitchen was built."

As Mr Williams leaves Llangan to take up a new post as headteacher of Sully Primary School, he would like to thank the pupils, parents, staff and governing body for their support and patience while the building work was completed.

He added: "I am proud of having been part of the Llangan family as both deputy headteacher and now headteacher.

"I hope that future generations of pupils and staff enjoy the fantastic facilities available to them and continue to offer a top-rate education for the children in the community."

READERS' LETTERS

Monster block!

ABOVE: The road to nowhere!

THIS photograph was taken at The Rise, Ystradowen, where enormous lorries arrive daily blocking the road, driving over the pavements.

How planning was given to such a narrow access to a housing estate of 40 – 50 houses, I cannot fathom.

The north facing slope of this road will freeze over before long, and one or more of these monstrous vehicles is going to finish up in somebody's garden. Or house!

William R Turner, Ystradowen.

Council, too, fought for Post Office

I AM sure that all of us in Cowbridge will be delighted to see the new post office due open on December 9 – and a big thank you to all who have worked hard to achieve this.

I want you to know that the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council, too, was very involved in working hard for this result.

We had the Post Office people come to talk to us acbout their difficulties and we have been in regular touch with them since April 2014. Our Town Clerk, Mr Andrew Davies, has written to them on numerous occasions – and has answered their queries many times – so our sincere thanks to him for all his efforts.

Coun Gwen Baty, Cowbridge.

LALESTON CELEBRATION

SOROPTIMIST International Bridgend are holding a 'Christmas Celebration' at 6pm, Wednesday, on December 9, in St David's Church, Laleston, with carols and readings featuring Ogmore Vale Male Voice Choir. All are welcome.

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SANTA AND HIS REINDEER THRILL THE CROWDS AT ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVENT

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

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Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

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THE Cowbridge Reindeer Parade took place on Sunday, November 29, and drew large crowds to the town.

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As you can see, Glyn Evans was on hand to capture some precious memories.

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Ers dechrau yn eich rôl fel Pennaeth dros 15 mlynedd yn ôl, ydych chi'n gweld bod statws a phroffil y Gymraeg wedi cynyddu yn y Fro?

Do yn bendant ac rwy'n gobeithio bod yr ysgol wedi gwneud cyfraniad pwysig yn hyn o beth. Dechreuwyd YGBM gyda 123 o ddisgyblion. Cyn pen dim fe fydd 1500 yn yr ysgol. Mae dwy ysgol gynradd newydd wedi eu sefydlu yn ddiweddar. Beth sydd yn braf yw cael sgwrs ar strydoedd yr ardal gyda rhieni sydd wedi dewis danfon eu plant at ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg oherwydd llwyddiant ein hysgolion. Testun balchder oedd bod Eisteddfod 2012 wedi gwneud elw ac wedi bod yn llwyddiant yn wyneb sawl her gan gynnwys y gemau Olympaidd yn Llundain.

Dwedwch ychydig wrthom am eich swydd newydd.

Rwy'n mynd i fod yn Ddeon Addysg Prifysgol y Drindod Dewi Sant. Mae nifer o newidiadau ar droed ym myd hyfforddi athrawon a'r nod yw arwain y Gyfadran yn ystod y cyfnod yma. Rydym yn anelu at greu Athrofa Addysg Genedlaethol fydd yn ganolbwynt arbenigedd addysg a hyfforddiant i Gymru gyfan.

Beth ydy'ch diddordebau?

Chwaraeon - heb unrhyw amheuaeth!

Beth yw eich uchelgais am y ddeng mlynedd nesaf?

Fod yr Athrofa yn cael ei gweld fel un o'r goreuon yn y DU ac ein bod yn darparu athrawon o'r radd flaenaf. Mae pobl ifanc y wlad yn haeddu hyn ac mae ein hathrawon yn haeddu'r gefnogaeth broffesiynol orau posib.

Gyda phwy fasech chi'n hoffi cael pryd o fwyd?

Heblaw am un rhamantus gyda Glenda! – teulu a ffrindiau agos bob tro. Ym myd chwaraeon, John Charles. O fyd hanes, yr unigolyn o'r ddeunawfed ganrif oedd yn destun fy nhraethawd PhD, er mwyn i mi gael gweld pa mor gywir oedd fy namcaniaethau amdano! Os oeddwn yn gywir mae'n debygol na fyddwn yn rhoi ail wahoddiad am ginio iddo. Roedd yn ddyn diflas iawn!

Pwy ydych chi'n eu hedmygu?

Pobl sy'n llwyddo ac yn cyflawni heb fynd yn hunanbwysig. Heb ei fai heb ei eni.

Beth yw eich gwyliau delfrydol?

Nid oes un math arbennig. Ond gan amlaf dwi'n mwynhau orau pan rwyf yn gwneud rhywbeth. Nid wyf yn un da am eistedd i lawr wrth y pwll am oriau er fod hyn yn apelgar iawn ar hyn o bryd!

Lle yw eich hoff dafarn neu fwyty yn y Fro?

Bwyty - Arboreal a Market Place. Tafarn - lle bynnag mae'r hogia yn cytuno i fynd ar achlysuron arbennig. Sdim ots pa dafarn yr awn ni iddi da ni'n dueddol o droi'n hen ddynion blin yn rhamantu am yr oes a fu. Mae rhai yn waeth na'i gilydd cofiwch. Gan amla' y Vale neu'r Duke yn y Bontfaen sy'n gorfod ein croesawu.

Jambori yr Urdd

Ar Ddydd Mercher y 25ain o Dachwedd cafwyd diwrnod arbennig llawn hwyl a sbri yng Nghanolfan y Mileniwm

Daeth dros 2,000 o blant cynradd Caerdydd a'r Fro i sioe gan Gwenda Owen a'i band.

Roedd y Ganolfan yn llawn bwrlwm yn y bore a'r prynhawn gyda chanu a dawnsio gwych gan y plant a'r athrawon. O "joio yn y jambori", i "canu roc a rôl" daeth y clasuron i gyd mas ac roedd pawb wrth ei fodd yn canu a dawnsio.

Diolch o galon i Ganolfan y Mileniwm, Gwenda Owen a'r band, ond yn bennaf i bawb daeth i Jambori yr Urdd eleni.

Dyma rhai lluniau o'r digwyddiad.

Am fwy o wybodaeth am gweithgareddau'r Urdd cysylltwch a ni ar 02920 635684, neu Geraint@urdd.org

ANRHEGION NADOLIG Y SÊR

gan EIRY PALFREY

GADEWCH i'r sêr eich helpu i ddewis presantau fydd wrth fodd pob un o'r arwyddion.

ARIES:
Arweinwyr naturiol, sydd eisiau mynd, mynd o hyd. Fe fydden nhw wrth eu bodd gyda unrhyw beth newydd a chyffrous. Tabled neu gar newydd... rhywbeth â'u enw nhw arno, neu enw'r tŷ ar lechen? Maen nhw'n dwlu ar wydr a diamwntau. Prynwch ddrych er mwyn iddyn nhw gael edmygu'u hunain. Eu hoff liw yw coch.

TAURUS:
Pobl sy'n hoffi moethusrwydd a'r gorau o bob peth. Prynwch lun gwreiddiol mewn olew, planhigyn neu flodau – byddai unrhyw beth i'r ardd yn plesio. Gemau, tlysau, mwclis. Bwydydd moethus fel pate de foie gras, pwdin plwm o Harrods, neu botel o Bort (vintage). Mae gydan nhw wendid am siocledi – drud. Hoff liw: glas, pinc.

GEMINI:
Pobl brysur, amryddawn sy'n haeddu anrheg i hwyluso eu bywyd hectic. Dyma gyfathrebwyr y sidydd a mi fydden nhw wrth eu bodd yn cael tabled neu iphone 6, neu beiriant karaoke...neu falle sebon ar siâp meicroffon iddyn nhw gael canu yn y bath. Eu hoff liw yw melyn.

CANCER:
Mae rhain wrth eu bodd yn gofalu am bethau – ci, cath, tedi bêr neu blanhigyn. Rhowch anrheg i harddu'u cartref, yn enwedig os yw e'n arian neu'n antique. Maen nhw'n dwlu ar gasglu pethau stampiau, siwgiau, hen lwyau – rhywbeth. Prynwch ddillad cynnes – siol neu sgarff. Hoff liw – arian neu lwyd golau.

LEO:
Pobl hael sy'n hoffi creu argraff, ond os y'ch am ddal yn ffrindie gofalwch nad yw'ch anrheg chi yn well na'r un gawsoch chi wrthyn nhw! Prynwch rhywbeth i harddu'r gwallt – crib, rhuban, lliw. Rhowch docynnau theatr, cinio moethus, drych, gemau mawr, recordiau CD, neu ddillad 'flashy'. A'u hoff liwiau yw aur, melyn ac oren.

VIRGO:
Pobl drefnus gyda lle i bob peth. Mi fyddan nhw'n mwynhau cael dyddiadur electronig, filing cabinet, Geiriadur, Encyclopaedia. Dyma'r unig arwydd sy'n croesawu anrhegion o sebon neu aftershave. A mi fyddan nhw wrth eu bodd yn cael voucher i'r Clwb Iechyd. Hoff liwiau – nefi a llwyd.

LIBRA:
Pobl hawdd i'w plesio ond i chi roi rhywbeth moethus i'w helpu i ymlacio – potel o siampên, neu fyblbath. Pobl ramantus sy'n hoffi'r gorau – cinio i ddau, objets d'art chwaethus, perlau.... Danfonwch flodau neu prynwch CDs clasurol – fel Pavarotti neu Margaret Williams. Hoff liwiau: pinc neu las golau.

SCORPIO:
Pobl ddwfn a rhywiol sydd wrth eu bodd gydag ymchwil a sgandal – prynwch y Bywgraffiadur, Encyclopaedia, neu rhowch rhywbeth mewn lleder iddyn nhw... Potel o rywbeth bach cryf...neu gês o win coch...llyfrau ias a chyffro... Hoff liwiau: coch tywyll a du.

SAGITTARIUS:
Mae rhain yn hoffi antur, teithio a gadjets – prynwch docyn sengl i Beru, taith lawr yr Amazon... neu brosesydd bwyd – camera awtomatig, agorydd tun trydan.... Maen nhw'n hoffi ceffylau, cŵn mawr, ceir cyflym a chwaraeon, felly prynwch rywbeth sy'n ymwneud â'r rheiny. Tocynnau theatr, whisky, gwersi hedfan. Hoff liw: porffor.

CAPRICORN:
Pobl synhwyrol ac uchelgeisiol fyddai'n gwerthfawrogi anrheg ymarferol dibynnol fel Rolls Royce, Miele, Rolex neu Cartier. Neu rhowch rywbeth syml chwaethus iddyn nhw wedi ei lapio mewn papur Harrods. Mae llyfrau swmpus bob tro'n dderbyniol neu falwn i godi'u hysbryd. Lliwiau sobor – dim byd llachar – brown, du neu las tywyll.

AQUARIUS:
Mae rhain yn mwynhau spreis, a byddai unrhyw beth newydd a gwirion yn apelio fel cloc larwm sy'n esgus bod yn bêl griced, neu oriawr sy'n cynnau sigarets. Rhowch ddillad llachar streips o bob lliw, neu dei bô chwirligwgan lurex. Prynwch gemau bwrdd gwirion, amhosib i'w deall. Hoff liw yw glas llachar, streips a checks.

PISCES:
Pobl artistig, emosiynol – prynwch facynon poced pert, pysgod aur neu fotel o rhywbeth cryf. Maen nhw wrth eu boddau gyda sgidiau, sane silc du neu sliperi cynnes. Rhowch ddillad rhamantus iddyn nhw mewn chiffon neu felfed. Prynwch ganhwyllau, arogldarth neu docynnau i'r sinema. Hoff liwiau yw gwyrdd y môr a fioled.

ANGHARAD

DOES unman yn debyg i gartre medd yr hen ddywediad ac yn sicr does unman yn debyg i'r Bontfaen adeg y Nadolig.

Mae prydferthwch y coed bach ar waliau'r adeiladau hynod ar hyd y brif stryd yn ryfeddod. Does dim llawer o fantesion i'r nosweithiau hir tywyll heblaw bod oriau'n rhagor i werthfawrogi disgleirdeb Nadoligaidd y goleuadau godidog.

Ond mae sawl rheswm i ni wneud mwy na dim ond gwerthfawrogi'r goleuadau. Er mor hawdd yw'r siopau mawr, a phrynu arlein, mae'n bwysig hefyd ein bod yn siopa yn y dre neu bydd y siopau bach unigryw yn gorfod cau. Gallai hyny fod yn drychineb i hen dre farchnad fel y Bontfaen sy'n dibynnu ar ei hynodrwydd i ddenu busnes a chwsmeriaid.

Cyn rhuthro arlein felly dyma bwyntiau sy'n werth eu hystyried: bydd eich arian yn rhoi hwb i'r economi lleol – am bob punt sy'n cael ei wario mewn busnes bach mae 63c yn aros yn yr economi leol o'i gymharu a 40c gyda busnes mawr.

Y dewis moesol yw i brynu'n lleol a phrynu cynnyrch o fwtseriaid a gwerthwyr llysiau a ffrwythau lleol. Yn ogystal a chefnogi ffermwyr yr ardal bydd mwy o faeth yn y bwyd a llai o blastig lapio gwastraffus.

Mae siopau bach annibynnol yn llawn o anrhegion bach gwahanol ac unigryw sy'n anodd iawn i ddod o hyd iddynt ar y we neu mewn siopau mawr sy'n prynu popeth fesul llwyth.

Mae prynu'n lleol yn gymorth i gynnal cymunedau. Mae sawl siop fach yn cynnig digwyddiadau bach, boed yn grwpiau gwnio neu wau neu weithgareddau i'r plant. Os yw'r busnesau yn diflannu mae grwpiau cymunedol yn debygol o fynd ar gyfeiliorn hefyd. Mewn marchnadoedd Nadolig mae pwrpas cymdeithasol yn aml i'r stondinau – maent yn cynnig gwerth cyhoeddus yn ogystal â llefydd i brynu.

Mae gwerthwyr lleol yn debygol o roi gostyngiad i brynwyr ffyddlon, ac mae dod i adnabod y perchennog hefyd yn golygu y cewch gyngor da.

Ac felly rwyf wedi dod i'r casgliad mae'r peth gorau i'w wneud yn ysbryd yr wyl eleni yw i ddechrau adduned flwyddyn newydd yn gynnar, a chefnogi mwy o'r siopau bach sy'n dod a'r fath amrywiaeth gwych i'r Bontfaen. Welai chi yno. A Nadolig Llawen i chi gyd!

DYSGWYR YN MWYNHAU'R CWRS SADWRN

Daeth dros 50 o ddysgwyr Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg at ei gilydd ar ddydd Sadwrn 7fed Tachwedd i fwynhau Cwrs Sadwrn ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd

Thema'r Cwrs Sadwrn oedd Tywysogion a Chestyll Cymru. Roedd y dosbarthiadau yn llawn hwyl wrth i'r tiwtoriaid gwisgo fel tywysogion a chroeso siaradwr gwadd a oedd yn sôn am y Normaniaid. I gloi'r cwrs roedd cwis cerddoriaeth, roedd hwn yn gyfle gwych i'r dysgwyr ddod at ei gilydd ac ymarfer eu Cymraeg â phobl oedd ar lefelau gwahanol.

Dywedodd Glyn Wise, trefnydd y cwrs: "Mae'n hyfryd i weld cymaint o ddysgwyr ar lefelau gwahanol yn dod at ei gilydd i fwynhau ac ymarfer eu Cymraeg".

Beth am ddod ar y Cwrs Calan i ymarfer eich Cymraeg sydd ar yr 2il a'r 3ydd o Ionawr ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd? Am ragor o wybodaeth ewch i www.learnwelsh.co.uk neu ffoniwch 029 2087 4710.

Gweithgareddau Cyfrwng Cymraeg Cyngor Bro Morgannwg

Clwb Llyfrau

Bydd cyfarfod nesaf y Clwb Llyfrau ar nos Lun Rhagfyr 7fed, 19.30-20.30 yng Nghanolfan Palmerston, a byddwn yn trafod 'Afallon' gan Robat Gruffydd.

Darlith

'Ynni – Pŵer i'r dyfodol' gan Gareth Clubb (Cyfeillion y Ddaear Cymru) – dydd Sadwrn Rhagfyr 12fed, 11-12 yn Llyfrgell y Barri.

Dathliad Nadolig Cymreig

Crefftau, carolau a gweithgareddau traddodiadol – Nos Lun Rhagfyr 14eg, 18.30-20.30 yng Nghanolfan Palmerston.

Am fanylion pellach, cysylltwch â Mared Furnham: mnfurnham@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk / 01446 733762

Whodunnit at the Belfreey Hotel?

The cast of the murder mystery evening at Brynhill Golf Club.

Brynhill Golf Club members and guests were recently entertained to 'murder and mystery' in the Belfreey Hotel (Brynhill lounge).

The guests were shown to their tables and the cast started a highly hysterical evening's entertainment. Mr Ivor Bookin, hotel manager (Mike Underdown) put on a great performance with his wife Mrs Phyllis Bookin (played by Judy Davies), who also portrayed Inspector Laura Norder.

Nurse Cathy Trerize (Glynis Gould) was the long-suffering subject of Ivor's affections.

The waiter, Vinnie de Tableau (Tony Davies), and Sylvia the chambermaid (Sam Pascoe), both played their parts admirably.

The elf and safety prompter (Jo Kirkpatrick) was not called upon too often, as the cast had worked extremely hard and there was much hysterical ad libbing.

The cast were given a standing ovation at the end of the performance. ***JK***

MP calls for clarity on car parking policy

VALE MP Alun Cairns is calling on the Vale Council to clarify its position on proposed car parking charges – after council leader Neil Moore suggested that charges may not go ahead.

Mr Cairns met with over 100 businesses that could be affected by parking charges in the Vale last week.

Traders who met with Vale Council recently were unanimous in calling for the council to scrap plans to charge, and following the comments from Mr Moore, the Vale MP is calling for clarity to boost new starters on the high street.

In last week's GEM, the Vale leader gave a heavy hint that the council is unlikely to proceed with the planned charges. He wrote: "I can confirm that as a council we will be seriously reconsidering if (and it's a big if), we should introduce car parking charges in Barry and Cowbridge town centres, after having conversations with local people and traders in both towns."

Mr Cairns said: "Coun Moore has indicated that he has listened to the valid concerns of traders, and to his credit he is showing the necessary leadership to get the policy right.

"I am concerned that allowing the uncertainty to drag on will stop new shops opening.

"I have been told that a number of new businesses are, understandably, holding off signing leases until the policy on car parking is clarified."

Department for Work & Pensions

IF YOU WERE
born on or after 6th April 1951
OR
born on or after 6th April 1953
THIS APPLIES TO YOU

Our State Pension is changing

Knowing how much to expect from your State Pension will help you plan for your future

The State Pension is being changed in April 2016 to make it easier to understand in the future. How much you get depends on your National Insurance record. If you're 55 or over you can request a State Pension statement based on the new rules.

To find out more information about what you're entitled to and how to order a State Pension statement visit:
www.gov.uk/yourstatepension

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

THE STATE PENSION IS CHANGING – KNOW THE FACTS

THE State Pension is a regular payment from the government most of us can claim when we reach State Pension age. On 6 April 2016, the new State Pension will be introduced for women born on or after the 6 April 1953, and men born on or after 6 April 1951. The changes to the current system will make it less complicated in the future..

If you were born before these dates, you'll continue to receive your State Pension under the current scheme, even if you defer claiming it.

How much will I get?

This will depend on your National Insurance (NI) record so not everyone will get the same amount. You'll normally need at least 10 qualifying years to get any State Pension. These can be from before or after 6 April 2016, and don't have to be ten years in a row.

The full amount of the new State Pension will be around £155.65 a week but you may get more or less than this depending on your past NI record.

No one who qualifies for the new State Pension should get less than they would have received under the old system, based on their own contributions to April 2016.

What if you are or were in a pension scheme at work?

If you are or were in a salary-related pension scheme at work (for example, "final salary" or "career average"), or you were in any type of pension scheme at work before April 2012, you are likely to have been "contracted-out" of the Additional State Pension. (This is part of the current State Pension system). Some stakeholder and personal pension schemes were also "contracted-out".

If you have been contracted-out of the Additional State Pension this means you paid less NI into the State system and built up some private pension instead. However, your private pension should include an amount that, in most cases, will be at least equivalent to the Additional State Pension you contracted-out of.

The actual amount you'll receive from your contracted-out pension scheme will depend on the scheme.

From April 2016, contracting-out will end as will the reduced NI rate contracted-out employers and employees have been paying.

Department for Work & Pensions

How can I increase my State Pension?

National Insurance (NI) credits can help fill gaps in your NI record. They may increase the amount of new State Pension you get when you reach State Pension age.

You may also be able to pay voluntary contributions to fill gaps you may have for recent years on your NI record. Check your position before you do this to ensure you can benefit.

You may be able to increase your State Pension if you are working and paying NI contributions.

If you choose to defer claiming your new State Pension when you reach State Pension age, you may build up extra State Pension. Not everyone can defer – please check whether you are eligible.

National Insurance Credits that you might get

You can get credits in various circumstances which might include:

• Caring for one or more disabled people, for at least 20 hours a week.

• Receiving certain benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Carers Allowance.

• Caring for a grandchild or other family member under the age of 12.

Find out what this means for you by visiting www.gov.uk/yourstatepension.

If you are aged 55 or over you can ask for a State Pension statement for an estimate of your

Helping people who suffered in Nepal disaster

MOST of us will no doubt remember the tragic events that befell Nepal in April of this year: although geographically thousands of miles apart, the community of Y Bont Faen Primary was determined to help, particularly as one family originates from Nepal.

The quakes and resulting aftershocks caused horrific damage to their country – destroying schools, hospitals and homes, as well as tearing families apart – many of whom tragically lost loved ones to this epic disaster.

Alongside the Tamang family, Y Bont Faen decided to raise money for the charity Aid for Nepali Children.

The charity was already building schools for children who, in whatever circumstance, could not access free education; as well as employing teachers and maintaining existing school buildings. Tragically, the disaster wiped out so much of the amazing work the charity had already done. So the Y Bont Faen community decided to help by launching *'Sponsor Our Stones'*.

By asking people to commit to sponsoring a stone, they hoped they could literally help rebuild the lives of the Nepalese people as well as secure the future education of generations to come.

The project was extended to schools around the rural Vale, who helped to raise further funds for this wonderful charity. A huge thank you must also go to Cowbridge Rotary, Eagleswell Primary, St David's Primary, Llangan Primary, Wick and Marcross Primary, St Nicholas Primary, Llanfair Primary, Ysgol Dewi Sant and Iolo Morganwg.

To date, an amazing £3,000 has been raised and it is especially fitting, that so many schools have been able to work together to rebuild educational establishments. If you are interested in finding out more about Aid for Nepali Children visit their website at *www.aidfornepalichildren.org.uk/*.

CAROLS AT ST DONATS CHURCH

Everyone enjoyed the carol service at St Donats. PHOTO by HEATHER MARCH

ST DONATS Church held their early carol service before the end of Atlantic College term, when everyone enjoyed music and readings by staff and students from many different countries and beautiful, unaccompanied singing by the AC Acapella Group and St Donats children. A collection was made for Medecins Sans Frontieres.

Barry born author's Christmas novellas have been released

BARRY-born author Jill Barry has two Christmas novellas available for digital download.

Endeavour Press commissioned her to write a foodie themed festive story and *Crazy Days of Christmas* stars charismatic cooks, 'Lucy' and co-chef 'James'.

And *Christmas in the Country* takes readers back to the Roaring Twenties, one of her favourite eras.

Jill said: "Thoroughly modern Annabel dislikes what she's heard about Viscount Lassiter, a last-minute house-guest at the family celebration, and is determined to shun him. If readers are fans of Downton Abbey, they should enjoy Christmas with the Crawford clan."

The GEM featured Jill (real name Sandra Mackness) earlier this year when she topped the Amazon Kindle contemporary romance novel list.

Author Jill Barry.

Readers can find her Christmas novellas by going to Amazon and putting in the name 'Jill Barry' and the title of the novella.

Jill grew up in Barry – her father owned The Corner Garage on the current Kwit Fit site (just off Gladstone Road roundabout). She developed her love of stories and literature during her visits to the town's library when she was young

She wrote the two novellas during the summer and helped create the right mood by listening to carols while writing!

She curently lives in Ammanford, but will be a little closer to her Barry roots when she moves to the Newport area soon.

Cowbridge Choral Society

ON December 5 at 6.30pm Cowbridge Choral Society will present their Christmas Celebration concert in Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge.

Tickets from WG Davies, 38 High Street Cowbridge; choral society members, or on the door. There will be music old and new and guest performers Old Spice, Vanessa John Hall, and the children from Wick and Marcross C/W Primary School.

New members always welcome; rehearsals take place in United Free Church on Westgate Street every Thursday at 7.30pm.

Christmas Extravaganza

NANTYMOEL Community Association is holding a fair on Sunday, December 6 10am – 2pm, at Ogmore Valley Life Centre.

There will be stalls from local businesses, crafts, pre-loved books and DVDs; raffle, refreshments, and more! There will also be festive music from Ogmore Valley Silver Band. Entry is free!

Stalls still available – to book or for further information, contact ogmorevalley@outlook.com or on the coffee shop number 01656 840080.

WI group sees book of condolence

The AM shows the Llanblethian WI group the book of condolence for victims of the Paris killings.

RECENTLY, the Llanblethian WI had a special VIP tour to celebrate the movement's centenary.

Vale AM Jane Hutt explained: "For the past 100 years, the WI has provided women with educational opportunities and the chance to campaign on issues that matter to them. I was delighted to welcome them to the Senedd."

CAROLS AT ST ILLTYD'S

FRIENDS of Tenovus are holding their Lovelight Carol Service at St Illtyd's Church, Llantwit Major on Tuesday, December 15 at 7.30pm. All welcome.

JOINT CAPTAINS' DRIVE NETS £948 FOR RNIB

GROVE Golf Club's presentation night was held on November 27: Club captain Neil Summers and Ladies' captain, Vicky Ford, combined their fundraising efforts during the year toward one charity which they agreed would be the RNIB Cymru (Royal National Institute for the Blind in Wales).

During the course of the presentation evening, a cheque for £9484.40 was accepted on behalf of the charity by Carol Mckinlay, the area fundraising manager at RNIB Cymru.

The donation was made possible by events held throughout the year, including the Porthcawl Christmas morning swim, raffles, a ladies' Ascot day held at The Grove, and a very successful joint captains' charity day.

The RNIB Cymru supports people with sight loss in Wales, and Neil and Vicky said they were "very grateful" for all the donations and support for their efforts to raise such a large amount for this worthwhile cause.

Talented pupils' mosaic artwork goes on show

PUPILS, staff and parents of Colcot Primary School are delighted with the new mosaic mural that has been completed this term.

Pupils were asked to base their drawings on their 10 school values. and artist Kate Derbyshire worked with them, using their drawings to design a spectacular mural for the playground wall. Every pupil had the opportunity to work with Kate on various stages of the artwork.

The younger pupils made clay hand prints and decorated them; the older pupils worked with the coloured tiles to make the mosaic featuring the ten values.

The colours chosen in the art work are bright and bold and bring sunshine to the playground even on a wet, grey day!

ME

Black dogs were looking for love on Black Friday

JET.

LOLA.

ON Black Friday, there was no 'retail therapy' for residents at Dogs Trust Bridgend – but the rehoming centre is taking the opportunity to celebrate three black dog residents in the hope that it will help them to find loving new homes.

Lola, Seren and Jet are all looking for homes, and staff were hoping Black Friday would prove lucky for the trio.

Supporter Relations Officer, Linda Feagan explained: "We thought it would be the perfect opportunity to celebrate the wonderful black dogs in our care! They are all such superb characters and they really deserve to find a loving new home – we thought if any day would be lucky for them, then surely it's Black Friday!"

Call Dogs Trust on 0300 303 0292 or visit www.dogstrust.org.uk.

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
www.barry-today.co.uk/ www.cowbridge-today.co.uk/ www.llantwit-major-today.co.uk/ www.bridgend-today.co.uk/www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

PC's arresting award for fighting wildlife crime

ABOVE PC Mark Goulding with Chief Constable Simon Prince and Sarah Goddard from WWF-UK. Photo by G Shorrock, RSPB.

PC MARK GOULDING of South Wales Police, currently on secondment to Natural Resources Wales, has won the WWF-Sponsored Wildlife Law Enforcer of the Year Award 2015 for tackling fishing poaching and raising awareness among partner agencies.

He received his award from Sarah Goddard, Species Policy Officer at WWF-UK, and Chief Constable Simon Prince of Dyfed-Powys Police at the National Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference at Leamington Spa. Law enforcers, statutory agencies and NGOs had gathered to hear about successes and challenges in combating wildlife crime in the UK.

PC Goulding, who developed the River Taff Project with colleagues from Natural Resources Wales, has helped reduce poaching on the river between Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil, and a number of prosecutions are currently ongoing, thanks to his work.

Also thanks to his work, three men were prosecuted for releasing into the wild a viable breeding population of wild boar following a commercial burglary.

PC Goulding has recently taken on the responsibility of being the historic and ancient monument crime single point of contact for South Wales Police and reports to the force's Assistant Chief Constable.

He has recovered a fossil from a historical theft on a site of special scientific interest in mid Wales and is currently working on a case of damage in the Gower.

Barry at War Christmas crafts fair

THERE will be a fair at Barry Island Station on Sunday, December 13 from 11am – 3pm, with handmade cards and gifts made by local crafters.

The Barry War Museum and Railway Café will be open and the tourist railway Santa Specials will also be running.

Age Connects in a call for volunteers

AGE CONNECTS Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan is appealing for volunteers to continue the success of a 'Let's Get Out' project and reach out to more elderly people.

The service aims to reduce loneliness, isolation and improve wellbeing, but needs more volunteers.

Vale co-ordinator Samantha Jones said: "We are finding a real need for this kind of service in and around Barry; sadly, at the moment we do not have the volunteer resources to help everyone who needs it. We are looking for volunteers to accompany an older person to a lunch group, out for a cup of tea, or simply a stroll around the shops.

"If anyone has an hour or so a week to help, please get in touch."

Iris, who has lived in Barry for many years, found the project a great help after she broke her hip.

Having been previously quite independent, she found the weekly walk to her local shops overwhelming, to the point where she couldn't leave the house alone.

Contact Samantha on 07584 346014 for more information, or if you would like to help out.

Use your Welsh around Bridgend county!

MENTER Bro Ogwr promotes and furthers the use of the Welsh language in Bridgend county. The intention is to raise the profile of the Welsh language in the county by increasing the opportunities for residents to use the language in a variety of fields. This is what's going on this month:

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday: Porthcawl Coffee morning for Welsh learners and speakers, YMCA Porthcawl, 11am-12am; Science Club for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg y Ferch o'r Sgêr pupils, lunchtime, free; Arts and Crafts Club for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bro Ogwr pupils, 3.30pm–4.30pm, £1 a session.

Tuesday: Bridgend coffee morning for Welsh learners and speakers, Tŷ Coffi Bridgend, 10am-11am; Animation Club for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw pupils, lunchtime, free.

Wednesday: DJ lessons club, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, lunchtime; Art Club for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg y Ferch o'r Sgêr pupils, lunchtime, free; Youth Club, Bridgend YMCA, 6pm-8pm, £1 a session.

Thursday: Playground Games Club for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cynwyd Sant pupils, lunchtime, free; Siop Siarad, Siop Yr Hen Bont, Bridgend – a chance for Welsh learners to ask questions and practice their Welsh with other learners. Every Thursday, Group 1: 12.45pm-1.30pm, Practicing Mynediad and Sylfaen patterns; Group 2: 1.30pm-2.15pm Start chatting in Welsh; Group 3: 2.15pm-3pm. For those who can hold a conversation in Welsh.

Dydd Gwener: Youth Club, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, lunchtime.

For more information, contact Menter Bro Ogwr 01656 732200, menter@broogwr.org, 07774 032624. Follow us on Facebook a Twitter for all the latest news.

Defnyddiwch eich Cymraeg ym Mhen-y-bont ar Ogwr!

MAE Menter Bro Ogwr yn hybu ac yn hyrwyddo'r defnydd o'r iaith Gymraeg yn sir Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. Bwriad y Fenter yw codi proffil yr iaith Gymraeg yn y sir gan gynyddu cyfleoedd trigolion o bob oedran ddefnyddio'r iaith mewn amrywiaeth o feysydd. Dyma beth sy'n digwydd gyda ni mis yma:

Digwyddiadau wythnosol:

Dydd Llun: Bore Coffi Porthcawl i ddysgwyr a Chymry Cymraeg, YMCA Porthcawl, 11-12yp; clwb Gwyddoniaeth i blant Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg y Ferch o'r Sgêr, amser cinio, am ddim; Clwb Celf a Chreffi i blant Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bro Ogwr, 3.30pm–4.30pm, £1 y sesiwn.

Dydd Mawrth: Bore Coffi Pen-y-bont i ddysgwyr a Chymry Cymraeg, Caffi Tŷ Coffi Pen-y-bont, 10-11yb; Clwb Animeiddio i blant Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw, amser cinio, am ddim.

Dydd Mercher: Clwb Gwersi DJ, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, amser cinio; Clwb Celf i blant Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg y Ferch o'r Sgêr, amser cinio, am ddim; Clwb Ieuenctid, YMCA Pen-y-bont, 6-8yh, £1 y sesiwn.

Dydd Iau: Clwb Gemau iard i blant Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cynwyd Sant, amser cinio, am ddim; Siop Siarad, Siop Yr Hen Bont, Pen-y-bont, Cyfle i ddysgwyr holi cwestiynau, ymarfer a gloywi eu Cymraeg, ynghyd â dysgwyr o'r un lefel. Pob Dydd Iau Grŵp 1: 12.45pm-1.30pm. Ymarfer patrymau iaith lefelau Mynediad a Sylfaen; Grŵp 2: 1.30pm-2.15pm. Dechrau sgwrsio yn Gymraeg; Grŵp 3: 2.15pm-3pm. I bobl sy'n gallu cynnal sgwrs Gymraeg.

Dydd Gwener: Clwb ieuenctid, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, amser cinio.

Am ragor o fanylion cysylltwch â ni! Menter Bro Ogwr 01656 732200; menter@broogwr.org; 07774 032624. Dilynwch ni ar Facebook a Twitter am y newyddion diweddaraf!

Menter Bro Ogwr annual general meeting 2015

ARE you passionate about the Welsh language? Would you like to play a role in the developments of the language in Bridgend county? We need you!

Menter Bro Ogwr promotes and furthers the use of the Welsh language by co-operating with associations, societies, businesses, learners and schools. The initiative's intention is to raise the profile of the Welsh language in the county by increasing the opportunities for residents to use the language in a variety of fields.

Menter Bro Ogwr was established in 1993 by a few enthusiasts who wanted to ensure that the Welsh language had a voice in the county. The intention of the initiative was to raise the profile of the language in Bro Ogwr by offering opportunities for people to use Welsh in addition to fostering confidence and increasing the number of new Welsh speakers.

Menter Bro Ogwr's annual meeting is being held this Thursday (December 3) in The Farmers, Nottage, Porthcawl at 7pm.

You are welcome to join us to hear about Menter Bro Ogwr's work over the last year. Menter Bro Ogwr is also looking for new members for our management committee and this meeting is your opportunity to be elected. Join us and let's see the Welsh language thriving in Bro Ogwr!

AJE

Cyfarfod Blynyddol Menter Bro Ogwr 2015

YDYCH chi'n teimlo'n angerddol dros yr iaith Gymraeg? Hoffech chi chwarae rhan yn natblygiadau'r Gymraeg yn sir Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr? 'Dyn ni eich angen chi!

Mae Menter Bro Ogwr yn hybu ac yn hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg drwy gydweithio â mudiadau, cymdeithasau, busnesau, dysgwyr ac ysgolion. Bwriad y Fenter yw codi proffil yr iaith Gymraeg yn y sir gan gynyddu cyfleoedd trigolion o bob oedran i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg mewn amrywiaeth o feysydd.

Sefydlwyd Menter Bro Ogwr yn Hydref 1993 gan griw o wirfoddolwyr oedd eisiau sicrhau llais i'r iaith Gymraeg. Nod y Fenter oedd codi proffil yr iaith ym Mro Ogwr drwy gynnig cyfleoedd i bobl ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn ogystal â magu hyder a chynyddu'r nifer o siaradwyr Cymraeg newydd.

Bydd Cyfarfod Blynyddol Menter Bro Ogwr yn cael eio gynnal ar nos Iau, Ragfyr 3 yn The Farmers, Notais, Porthcawl am 7yh.

Dyma gyfle i chi glywed am waith y Fenter dros y flwyddyn diwethaf. Rydym hefyd yn edrych am aelodau newydd ar gyfer ein pwyllgor rheoli ac mae'r cyfarfod yma'n gyfle i chi gael eich ethol. Ymunwch â ni er mwyn gweld y Gymraeg yn ffynnu ym Mro Ogwr!

AJE

WHY OWNER LEFT PET WITH THE DOGS TRUST...

'He won't fit in my handbag'

DOGS TRUST, which has a rehoming centre in Bridgend, has teamed up with some famous faces to launch'A Dog is For Life, Not Just For Christmas', following a year of ludicrous excuses by owners when giving up their pets.

Staff at Dogs Trust Bridgend were taken aback to hear a member of the public say they no longer wanted their dog because they didn't think it was a pedigree!

The line-up of celebrity dog lovers includes *Sky News*'s Eamonn Holmes, *Sherlock*'s Amanda Abbington, *Great British Bake Off*'s Mel Giedroyc and comedian Jon Richardson, whose shocked reactions were captured as they read out the farcical and sometimes bizarre excuses given by members of the public who no longer want their dogs.

The charity's staff have recorded the most preposterous excuses heard over the last 12 months.

These included: "He's too perfect;" "the fence was hit by lightning so we took it as a sign that we shouldn't have a dog;" "he chewed my model helicopter;" "he kept chewing the grandchildren's nappies;" "all he does is sleep;" "he doesn't bark;" "he looked different after we walked him in the rain;" "he won't fit in my handbag or wear the clothes I bought him."

Dogs Trust Bridgend, Supporter Relations Officer, Linda Feagan explained: "Sadly, there are many understandable reasons why people have to give up their dogs and we appreciate that circumstances can change beyond their control. However we cannot fathom that dogs should lose their security, comfort and home for such reasons they as "ate the banoffee pie" or "sat in front of the TV when the football was on."

New integrated transport plan could transform Wales' future

AN ambitious plan for a Metro integrated transport system in south Wales took a step forwards this week when the First Minister launched a campaign to raise awareness.

The scheme is expected to see a substantial increase in speed and frequency of public transport, using a combination of heavy rail, light rail and bus rapid transit, as well as other infrastructure improvements and integrated ticketing.

Carwyn Jones AM said he was delighted with the response from industry: "The Metro project represents the future of public transport in south-east Wales and will provide faster journey times and more frequent services covering a greater area. It is an ambitious project linking people and jobs across south Wales in a fast, efficient and environmentally positive way.

"The Metro is far more than just a transport project. It will be a catalyst for transforming the economic and social prospects of south-east Wales and the country as a whole," he predicted.

IN BRIEF

Advice surgery

DYFAN ward councillors Claire Curtis and Anthony Powell will hold an advice surgery on Saturday, December 5 at Buttrills Community Centre on North Walk, Barry from 10am to 11am. No appointment is necessary.

Nazareth fair

THE Nazareth Baptist Chapel, Bryncethin, holds its Christmas fair on Saturday, December 5.

Primary pupils get a special visit from musical Santas!

Lloyd Pearce (trombone), Corey Morris (trumpet), with Debbie Roblin from Western Power Distribution. Photo by Patrick Olner.

OAK Field primary school pupils had a special visit from musicians and puppeteers from the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff, who will be welcoming the children at the college to see *Santa's Stressful Day*.

Poor Santa! It's the day before Christmas Eve; the reindeer have all got terrible colds and might not be able to pull the sleigh.

So a very stressed-out Santa heads out around the world to try and find some other animals who could do the job instead.

He has just one day to find substitutes, or the world's children won't get their presents...

The college and Western Power are sponsoring the production. ND

PUPILS REPORT ON THEIR PROGRESS TO PARENTS...

BARRY Comprehensive School's year-7 students welcomed their parents/guardians and families to a recent pupil progress presentation evening.

They gave presentations to demonstrate the progress made since joining the school in September, focusing on English, maths and a subject of their choice.

As part of a school/home partnership, parents were asked to note targets for improvement and support materials were available to make sure the whole family can join-in and make the most of the learning opportunities available.

David Williams, senior learning mentor for year -7 said: "It was a delight to see so many parents involve themselves in the pupil progress evening. Hopefully, we can continue to work together to improve the learning of all pupils."

PICTURED ABOVE:
Year-7 students at the comprehensive report on their progress to their mums and dads...

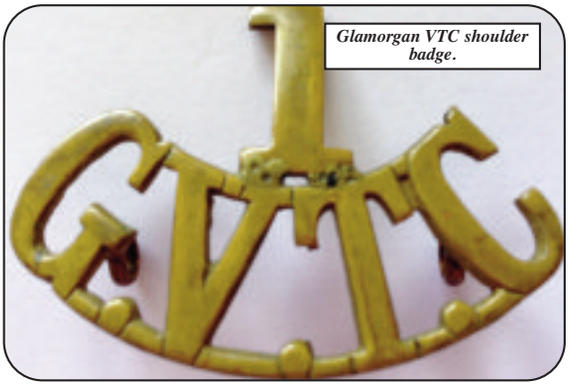
Two momentous events that marked December 1915

Amid the carnage, poppies become immortalised on Flanders Field

by Ceri Joseph

The Porthcawl Hotel.

The Esplanade Hotel.



Glamorgan VTC shoulder badge.

The National School, Lias Road.

The Coliseum.

TWO significant, yet initially unrelated events took place in December 1915, which were to prove influential in the years to come.

Douglas Haig replaced Sir John French as Commander in Chief of the British Army and John McCrae's poem 'On Flanders Field' was published, anonymously, in *Punch* magazine on December 8.

Lt Col John McCrae, a Canadian doctor, had been inspired by the appearance of poppies growing in the battlefield, after losing a friend at Ypres in the spring of 1915.

Douglas Haig, who had distinguished himself as Commander of the 1st Corps of the BEF at Mons and Ypres, became Supreme Commander of the British Army on December 16.

Evidence suggests that he played an active role in French's downfall, informing King George V that he had little confidence in Sir John French's command, but that he, Haig, "would be willing to do his duty in any capacity."

Consequently Haig himself would be remembered for the carnage of 'The Somme' the following year, for which his lack of tactical awareness would be nationally criticised .

Conversely, the poppy immortalised in the poem 'On Flanders Field' would become synonymous with the fallen. Not just with World War 1 casualties, but eventually adopted as a symbol of Remembrance for all British military engagements.

The Royal British Legion formed in 1921 raised over £106,000 from the first ever 'Poppy Appeal.' A French lady, Anna Guerin had bought the nine million poppies sold in Britain, but in 1922 Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory to employ disabled ex-Servicemen.

Interestingly, demand for poppies was so high in Britain in the ensuing years that Douglas Haig's wife established the Lady Haig Poppy Factory in Edinburgh in 1926.

Porthcawl's branch of the Royal British Legion was formed in 1924, evolving out of the local organisation Comrades of the Great War.

The Gallipoli campaign resulted in 250,000 Allied casualties. December 11 witnessed the final withdrawal of the severely depleted 53rd Welsh Division from Gallipoli to Alexandria, where in the New Year they would be involved in military action defending Serbia and Greece against the Bulgarians.

However, prior to the Welsh arriving, one Porthcawlian had already seen action at Salonika in the Battle of Kosturino. Prior to landing on Salonika, 2nd Lieutenant Charles Alan Smith Morris, Clevis House, Newton, Porthcawl had already seen active service, being wounded in his right knee at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle the previous March 1915.

On November 18, 1915 2nd Lt Morris, one of a 350-strong Bedfordshire Regiment contingent, landed at Salonika attached to the 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers, whose number had been depleted to 280 due to their involvement in the Gallipoli Campaign.

As part of the restructuring, the 20-year-old 2nd Lt Morris found himself in command of a company, despite having only seen around 24 hours of service on a front line by that time.

He kept a diary in which he describes his time at 'Rocky Peak', which would eventually become part of what became known as the Battle of Kosturino between the forces of Bulgaria and Great Britain.

Morris wrote on December 3, 1915: 'When we got to the Regiment, (November 28) we had a very thin time, no tents, huts or billets, but just a bivouac where you were out in the open. It was freezing hard at night then, the men had nothing, except one blanket and a waterproof sheet.

'The next night it rained, and we all got very wet, as there is no cover and nowhere to dry anything.' He continued: 'The next night it got much colder and snowed, and all the next day, ending up with about four inches of snow on the ground.'

Lt Morris then explains how the Company Commander went sick with jaundice and he had to take command. After four days, the company ended up further up the line on a rocky peak.

The blizzards that welcomed December took their toll on his men. Many went down with frostbite, lost their toes, all of which weakened the regiment.

However, it did not weaken Morris's resolve. Describing their position as 4,000 foot up in the mountains, with no roads and deserted villages, Morris relates how – 'The Bulgars don't seem a bit keen on fighting and a lot of them have been giving themselves up.'

Yet on December 7, Lt Morris led an assault on the 'Bulgars' stronghold as the fog descended. According to dispatches, Morris got shot in the right shoulder and 'vanished in the fog.'

In his diary, he describes how he had to walk a few miles to the nearest dressing station

Lt Col John McCrae.

Lt CAS Morris.

before being transferred onto a hospital ship, bound for England.

Major Charles Alan Smith Morris, as he is later to be addressed, sadly did not survive the war. His story, which was related in April's issue, stated that he died on May 7, 1917, near Arras.

Meanwhile, back in Porthcawl on the second week in December, 124 men enlisted into the services at the Esplanade; and the first meeting took place of the Porthcawl branch of the Glamorgan Voluntary Training Corps.

The need to play their part in the war was keenly felt among those outside enlisting age, or those with genuine reasons unable to join the regular army.

The scheme was viewed more as a home defence organisation against a German invasion. Nationally, the Volunteer Training Corps was suspended in December 1918. It was officially disbanded in January 1920, with the exception of the Volunteer Motor Corps, which was retained until April 1921 in case of civil disorder. The idea would emerge again as the Home Guard in World War 2.

Amid a time of fear and heartache, the Christmas spirit still endured. In response to a national request for footballs for the front, the Rev DG Samuel, the newly-appointed curate to the parish, presented one to the 23rd Pioneer Battalion, stationed at the town.

Further, Christmas dinner for the 150 wounded men of the Welsh Regiment Danygraig camp was served at 1pm at the Porthcawl Hotel, and was paid for and provided by the management of the Porthcawl Coliseum (the Spar today).

A thousand cigarettes were also supplied by the children of the Porthcawl Council Schools, who had trawled the town during the month, collecting their gift.

The 90 wounded soldiers at 'The Rest' were also treated to a Christmas dinner at 5pm and an evening of entertainment; but they enjoyed the fruit and sweets provided by the children of Porthcawl's private schools.

The month ended with the news that, on December 28, the British Government had agreed to introduce compulsory military service, with single men to be conscripted before married ones.

The Military Services Act was passed in January 1916; and came into force in March, that same year.

CERI JOSEPH
Porthcawl Museu

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
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SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER

SHOP LOCAL

Support Local Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER

Stay up to date with all the latest offers from businesses in and around your area by reading The GEM every week!

Sully Christmas Markets

at Sully Sports & Social Club, South Road, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 5SP

10am to 4pm

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th December
Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th December
Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th December

Come and enjoy our Christmas Markets!

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For more details: www.sullysportsclub.com
www.facebook.com/SullySportsandSocialClub
www.facebook.com/SullyCarBootSale

'LET'S GET OUT AND SHOP LOCALLY,' CALL

Support the 'lifeblood of local communities' on Small Business Saturday

RETAILERS and local politicians are urging people in general to support 'Small Business Saturday' by getting out and shopping at local, independent businesses on December 5.

Small Business Saturday UK is a grassroots, non-commercial campaign, which highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities.

The day itself takes place on the first shopping Saturday in December each year, but the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses.

Described as the "lifeblood of the economy, it was revealed this week by Welsh Government statisticians that there have been 13,735 new start-ups since 2011.

Economy Minister Edwina Hart AM said: "Over 99 per cent (almost 218,000) of businesses in Wales are Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs), and these employ 60 per cent of the people working in the private sector.

"Small Business Saturday is an opportunity to recognise the role of entrepreneurs and small businesses in building a strong economy, encouraging growth and creating jobs."

Small Business Saturday UK's website at the moment features 100 small businesses, and a glance at this (*https://www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com*) only goes to show how many bright ideas are out there – ideas that add to the variety of life, and which may well grow into something much bigger.

With the number 100 in mind, Vale MP Alun Cairns set out to visit traders in Barry, Llantwit, Cowbridge and Dinas Powys to encourage shoppers to use their local shops on what will be one of the busiest shopping days of the year.

He said: "Small businesses are a vital part of the Vale. The first Small Business Saturday took place in 2013, since then businesses in Barry and across the Vale have benefitted from recognition of the contribution they make to our towns and villages.

"It is a real shot in the arm for smaller, independent traders to welcome local customers."

There was also support from the Vale AM, Jane Hutt, who said: "I am proud to support Small Business Saturday and will be doing my Christmas shopping on the great Barry High street!

"Small Business Saturday encourages consumers to 'shop local' and this chimes with the work that the Welsh Government is doing through its own 'support your high street campaign' and rate relief scheme."

The leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew RT Davies AM, is encouraging residents across the Vale to support their local high streets and businesses on Saturday.

He said: " Napoleon once described the UK as a nation of shopkeepers, and that's certainly true in the Vale, where small businesses make a huge contribution to the local economy.

"Our small businesses are the lifeblood of our local communities and where possible we must do all we can to support them.

"As a regular user of the high streets in Cowbridge and the rest of the Vale, I would urge people to shop local and take the time to visit your high street and offer your support."

(SEE FACING PAGE)

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Celebrate entrepreneurial spirit…and use it or lose it!'

Small businesses can only thrive with our local public's support

by local business owner
FAY BLAKELEY

SMALL businesses are vital to local communities – they're often the springboard for independent entrepreneurs and bring diversity to the High Street.

Britain is rightly known throughout the world for its creativity, and small businesses are a breeding ground for creative ideas.

We should all support them.

In today's economy it's a 'use it or lose it' situation. Small businesses can only thrive in the communities they serve if those communities value them and get behind them.

A day like Small Business Saturday is not only a celebration of entrepreneurial spirit, it's a great reminder to us all of the value of the businesses on our doorsteps.

SHOP LOCAL
Support Local Businesses
SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
5TH DECEMBER

'Lights put town on map ready for Small Business Saturday'

SATURDAY night's Holton Road Christmas lights show was another example of Barry putting itself on the map.

As the local councillor, I was proud to see King Square packed with families enjoying themselves at the spectacle, watching the 3D animation on the Town Hall and joining in the countdown, and that, after the awful weather all day, the rain stayed away at the right time!

Special thanks go to the Vale Council and staff, especially town centres manager Mari-Wyn Elias Jones for her hard work throughout the year to put the event on, and the staff of TL Computer Systems on Holton Road, who organised the town centre's Christmas market during the day.

With Small Business Saturday coming this weekend, why not take another look at our town centre for your presents, and see what else you can do to make Barry thrive over the Christmas period and into the New Year?

Coun Ian Johnson,
Barry,
Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales.

Come sample and buy delicious Welsh produce - including cheeses, wines, chocolate.
High Street BARRY
Artisan Christmas Market
— Saturday 5 December 10am-7pm —
There'll also be loads of handcrafted gifts & goodies.
Get your Christmas shopping off to a flying start!
high street

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FOCUS ON DEMENTIA

'You find out who your friends are...People stop inviting you to things'

CARERS and people living with dementia are supporting Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's 'Dementia December', a local initiative to raise awareness of the disease.

A UHB spokesperson reports: The campaign, supported by University Health Board (UHB) staff, aims to improve the experiences of people with dementia and their carers. The focus is on giving workers the knowledge and understanding to enhance the service they provide, during a stressful and confusing time for patients.

Jackie Askey, of Llandaff, cared for her husband George for 12 years following his diagnosis. He passed away in January of this year. Jackie praised the UHB's efforts to help staff support patients in a confident and empathetic way.

She said: "We need to help people with dementia lead as full a life as possible. This is a lifeline to the person with dementia and a lifeline to the carer."

Jackie urges health workers and people in the community to see the person beyond the dementia: "They still have an awful lot to give. The dementia is only a very small part of them and does not make the whole person."

As part of Dementia December, the UHB is working with its Dementia Champions, members of staff committed to helping dementia patients and carers. This includes techniques such as using simple sentences and gaining eye-contact.

Cardiff and Vale UHB has also been working in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to develop Dementia Friendly Communities, an Alzheimer's Society scheme designed to make communities more welcoming and inclusive. The UHB has collaborated with partners such as South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, City of Cardiff Council, the Vale Council and third sector organisations.

Cardiff West and Barry will celebrate working towards their Dementia Friendly Communities status on December 9. The event, at Barry Memorial Hall, acknowledges the ongoing commitment to supporting people with dementia in the community. With the number of people with dementia in Cardiff and the Vale expected to increase from 5,000 to over 8,000 by 2030, this is an important step.

Sharon Hopkins, Director of Public Health, welcomed the news. She said: "Living with dementia can be difficult for patients, as well as their family, friends and carers. It is important that UHB staff, as well as people living and working in our communities, take small but important steps such as speaking clearly and listening."

With Christmas approaching, it is important to remember that some people may be struggling or feeling isolated.

Jackie Askey remembers how George's diagnosis affected their social life: ***"You find out who your friends are... People stop inviting you to things."***

Staff across the UHB will be working together during Dementia December and in the future, to ensure that people like Jackie and George are supported, during the festive period and beyond.

Rugby boys pitch in to help refugees

OPERATION Christmas Child received a boost from members of the academy section at Cardiff Blues, who went to the warehouse in Llandow to help load a container lorry, which is now on its way to Kyrgyzstan, Romania and to refugee camps in Europe.

'Follow Parc model for prison visits' – REPORT URGES

PRISON visit rules risk keeping thousands of families apart, the Barnardo's charity has warned.

Prisons should adopt the HMP Parc Bridgend model, and view visits as a family intervention, rather than a security risk, it maintains in a report this week.

"The prison system in Wales and England is jeopardising thousands of children's rights to see their dads, and family visits should not be used to discipline prisoners," it states.

Over 17,000 children visit prisons each month, Barnardo's survey of the prison visiting system Locked Out reveals. They are part of the estimated 200,000 children with a parent in prison.

"Children have a right under the United Nations to contact with both their parents. For children with a parent in prison, visits are crucial in maintaining these relationships and can help cut down re-offending by 39 per cent.

"However, visiting hours are increasingly being taken away to punish prisoners following changes to the 'Incentives and Earned Privileges' (IEP) scheme, leaving some children with just two hours a month to visit dad."

The report also finds that children are regularly being searched by guards in intrusive interactions that see items such as breast-milk sniffed, hair searched and personal effects such as hair decorations taken away.

Despite no clear evidence existing that parents use children to smuggle drugs, one boy reports 'Feeling like you've done something wrong'.

Barnardo's is calling for changes in the way children of prisoners are treated in Wales and England. This includes effectively banning using visiting hours to punish and reward prisoners in male prisons.

ROMILLY CHRISTMAS FETE

THE PTA at Romilly Primary School is holding a Christmas fete this Saturday (December 5), from 12 noon until 4pm, when stalls include crafts, bric-a-brac, games, cakes and raffles, plus Santa's grotto.

Sam Carpenter, chair of Romilly Primary School PTA, said: "We are building on the success of last year's fete, and hope that the community will get behind this year's event, which we hope will raise funds for equipment that the children need."

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Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Development that may affect a Conservation Area/ Datblygu a allai effeithio ar Ardal Gadwraeth

Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01225/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Proposed installation of an ATM through the glazed shop front as a through glass installation to the left of the entrance door. ATM Wincor Procash 2050 fascia and Co-operative food polycarbonate green surround signage. White non illuminated lettering `free cash withdrawals` and `The Co-operative food`
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Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth	Cowbridge
Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01260/ADV
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Proposed installation of an ATM through the glazed shop front as a through glass illumination to the left of the entrance door. ATM Wincor Procash 2050 fascia and Cooperative food polycarbonate green surround signage. White non illuminated lettering free cash Withdrawals and The Co-operative food
Location:/Lleoliad:	Co-operative Food, 57, High Street, Cowbridge
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth	Cowbridge
Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01262/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Replace 2 windows currently aluminium framed double glazed with UPVC sash sliding double glazed
Location:/Lleoliad:	37, Westbourne Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth	Penarth
Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01298/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Repairs and improvements to the existing Old Harbour revetment in the interests of flood prevention and the construction of a new footway / cycleway across the revetment to create a new route linking the Barry Island Causeway to the Old Harbour Car park
Location:/Lleoliad:	Harbour Road Causeway, Barry Island, Barry
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth	Barry (Marine)

Application(s) of General Interest/ Ceisiadau o Ddiddordeb Cyffredinol

Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01183/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Change of use to D2 Leisure/Sports Area, to include internal sports pitches, sports facilities, car parking provision, bar area, community cafe and conference rooms, offices and sport shop etc.
Location:/Lleoliad:	Cambria House, Penarth Road, Penarth
Application No:/ Rhif y cais:	2015/01305/RES
Proposal:/Cynnig:	Development of site known as South Quay (Parkside) for residential development and associated infrastructure works, parking servicing and landscape
Location:/Lleoliad:	Site known as South Quay, Barry Waterfront, Barry

Details may be inspected for 21 days at the address given below, or via **http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/**

Gall manylion eu harchwilio am 21 diwrnod yn y cyfeiriad a roddir isod, neu drwy **http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/**

Dated / Dyddiedig: 3 December, 2015

V. L. Robinson
Operational Manager, Regeneration and Planning, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT

PACT meetings

STANWELL PACT *on Friday, December 4 at Elfed Avenue Church at 5pm.*

DYFAN PACT *on Sunday, December 6 at Highlight Park Community Centre at 7.30pm.*

BARUC PACT *on Monday, December 7 at St Barucs Church, Phyllis Street, Barry Island at 6.30pm.*

ILLTYD PACT *on Thursday, December 10 at Aberthaw House Hotel, Porthkerry Road, Barry at 3pm.*

SULLY PACT *on Thursday, December 10 at the Cricket Pavilion, Burnham Avenue Sully at 6.30pm..*

Colitis awareness week highlighted

A WELSH Conservative regional AM, Dr Altaf Hussain, is supporting international Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week (December 1 – 7); highlighting the impact of living with Crohn's Disease or ulcerative colitis, the two main forms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

These are unpredictable diseases that affect more than 300,000 people in the UK and approximately 15,000 people in Wales.

'More clarity needed on the Metro scheme'

AS the Welsh Government published its proposals for the south Wales Metro project this week, leader of the Welsh Conservatives and South Wales Central AM, Andrew RT Davies, commented: "The Metro must be more than just colourful lines on a publicity campaign's map.

"We need further clarity on how the scheme will work in practice and how gaps in service throughout the Vale of Glamorgan will be filled.

"We need more leadership on the introduction of a Metro system if its benefits are ever to be fully realised for residents in the Vale," he said.

Penarth Local History Society

THERE is a change of speaker for the December 10 meeting – the speaker will now be Ron Powell,talking about 'Shropshire to the Falklands', at All Saints' lesser church hall, Penarth at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Festive walks

RAMBLERS CYMRU groups will be leading free walks from December 19 until January 3, from short festive strolls to heartier rambles to kick-start New Year resolutions!

Ramblers Cymru director Angela Charleton said: "Winter is one of the best times to go out for a walk in Wales."

For further information, visit www.ramblers.org.uk/winterwalks.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Festive crafts at St Donats

CRAFTS for Christmas returns to St Donat's Castle this Sunday (December 6), bringing a mix of handmade crafts and food stalls to the Vale of Glamorgan, from 10.30am-4.30pm.

There are over 50 stalls to browse, including some first time exhibitors such as Cothi Valley Produce, Baked by Mel, and Welsh Slate Wall Art.

There will also be a bird of prey display in the castle gardens, and for younger visitors, a craft workshop and visit from Santa!

In addition to the craft and food stalls, there will be live music all day to keep everyone entertained. *Admission is £6 per car, or £2 per person on foot.*

Christmas choir concert

A CHRISTMAS concert by the Cantorion Creigiau Choir takes place at the Old School in Sully on Saturday, December 12 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £7.50 and are available from Ian Mathias on 02920 530441, Ken Jones on 02920 530893 or Steve Thomas on 02920 531486.

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Family Notices

RANDELL
Mary Beatrix

Peacefully on November 20 at The Manor House, St. Hilary, Trixie of Llantwit Major, beloved wife of the late David, dearly loved mother of Simon and Sarah.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Monday, December 7, service 12 noon at St. Illtuds Church, Llantwit Major, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium Bridgend at 1.15pm. No flowers by request, donations in lieu, if desired, to Marie Curie Cancer Care c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3DZ.

SMITH
Elizabeth Mary

Passed away peacefully on the November 28, Elizabeth of Llantwit Major, aged 94 years. Much loved mother of Derek, Diane, Elaine, Margaret and Ian, and a loving grandmother and great grandmother.

Resting at W. A. Brown & Son College, Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Friday, December 18 in St Illtud's Church at 12.30pm, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium at 1.45pm. Flowers may be sent to the funeral home.

LEWIS
Vivien (Née Wellington)

Died at home after a long illness on December 1. Much loved wife of Clive and mother to Rosey, Chris and Margaret, grandmother and great grandmother, will be sadly missed.

Funeral service at St John the Baptist Church, Llanblethian on Thursday, December 10 at 2.15pm, followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations if desired to the British Heart Foundation c/o Mr Jack Hawkins, 47 Cae Leon, Barry CF62 9TF.

LEADBITTER
Anthony (Tony)
(of Bwlch Gwyn Farm, Ystradowen)

The funeral service will take place on Friday, December 4 at 1.45pm at Bridgend Crematorium, followed afterwards at The Bear Hotel, Cowbridge.

Family flowers only, but donations, if wished, to Ward 2 East, Llandough Hospital in his memory.

GODWARD
Kevin

Suddenly on October 6 at Llandough Hospital, loving brother to Lynda and Denise, much loved uncle to all his nephews, nieces and sister-in-law Ruth.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Thursday, December 10, service and cremation 1.15pm at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend. No flowers by request.

MAYLIN
Eric John

Peacefully after a long illness on November 24 at Holme Tower, Penarth, Eric John, aged 72 years of Barry. Dearly loved husband of Theresa. Loving father of Mark, Dawn, Andrea, and father-in-law of Rose, Roger and Luke. Cherished grandfather of Luke, Zoe, Bethany, Lydia, Kieran, Dylan and Caitlin.

Eric will be sadly missed by all of his family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son funeral home, Gladstone Road, Barry, where flowers may be sent until the funeral on Wednesday, December 9. Service in the chapel at 11.30am, afterwards Interment at Barry Cemetery.

CHAPPLE
Dilys (Née Williams)

Peacefully on November 27 at Llandough Hospital - Dilys, well known of Barry Road and a keen skittler in Barry. Devoted wife to the late Douglas, much loved mum of Gwyn, Jane, Jennifer and Alun. Special mother-in-law of Pamela, Geoff and Linda. Cherished nan to her grandchildren and nanny Dilys to her great grandchildren. Loving sister of Nancy and the late Olwen and Gwyn.

She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Dilys is being cared for by Lyndsay Ellis @ The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until her service at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry on Monday, December 14 at 11am.

Family flowers only - donations if desired may be made at the service to The Stroke Association in memory of Dilys.

WILLIAMS
Geraint Elis *(Giz)*

The family wish to announce the sudden passing of Geraint on November 15 in Australia. Cherished son of Robert & Julie, much loved brother of Nia & Non, loved uncle to Megan, Elis and Robyn, loving fiancé to Christie.

Geraint will be greatly missed by all his family and many friends.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry, until his service at their Windsor Road Chapel, on Friday, December 11 at 1.45pm, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium.

Single flower only.

BUBBINS
Doris

Peacefully at home, on November 27, surrounded by her family, Doris Evelyn, wife of the late Bob. Mother of Jennifer, David, Gillian, Jonathan, mother in law of Peter, Janet, Cliff and Glynis. Grandmother of Helen, Eleanor, Kate and the late Jeremy.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until the funeral on Monday, December 7. Funeral service and committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road East, Barry, where family and friends please meet at 12 noon.

Donations to Marie Curie Holme Tower, Bridgeman Road, Penarth CF64 3YR.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Patricia Trudgian

Never a moment from our thoughts.

Love John, Jeremy, Jonathan, Jenny and all the family x.

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Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE LICENSING ACT 2003 TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I Geraint Simmonds do hereby give notice that I have applied to the Licensing Authority (Vale of Glamorgan Council) for the variation of a premises license at Wick Road, Ewenny, CF35 5AD, known as Ewenny Garden Centre Limited.

The application is to vary the licence to enable in house and off sale of alcohol from 9.00hrs until 18.00hrs, Monday to Saturday and from 10.30hrs until 16.30hrs on Sundays.

Any persons wishing to make representations to this application may do so in writing to the Licensing Department, Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF6 3RU, not later than 28 days after the date of this notice.

Representations received after this date will not be considered.

A copy of the application can be viewed at the Civic Offices during normal office hours.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with this application. The maximum fine on summary conviction being £5000.

Date - 27th November 2015.

Notice under Trustee Act 1925 s 27

Re: John Charles Pagler

PURSUANT to the Trustee Act 1925 NOTICE is given that all creditors and others having any claims against or claiming to be beneficially interested in the estate of John Charles Pagler, late of 14 Wordsworth Close, Llantwit Major, CF61 1WZ, who died on the 17th February 2015, and whose will was proved in the Probate Registry of Wales on 12th August 2015 by Jane Dorothy Pagler and Janet Louise Telles, the Executors named in it, are required to send particulars in writing to the undersigned solicitors on or before the 7th February 2016 after which date the said executors will proceed to distribute the assets of the deceased among the persons entitled to them, having regard only to the claims of which they then have had notice and shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part of them so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands they then have not had notice.

Dated 1st December 2015.
LG Williams & Prichard
22 St Andrews Crescent
Cardiff, CF10 3DD
Solicitors for the Executors
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I'm a disabled lady living in Llantwit Major is looking to employ a personal assistant to assist and support with domestic duties around my home and in the community.

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New year decision on Vale Housing – LOCAL RESIDENT LOOKS AT THE STATISTICS...

IT is two years since I wrote to The GEM about the LDP's housing projections – and the council have now produced their latest briefing paper on housing provision, using the latest WG statistics.

This paper is available on the Vale website and makes entertaining reading. It is a document which appears to start out with a number in mind and attempts to justify it.

As before, the paper and the LDP projects that the Vale population will rise from 126,000 living in 53,500 households to 132,500 by 2026 (this is a Welsh Government (WG) projection based on 2011 census details). A projected population increase of 6,500 (5 per cent) for the period.

The new WG statistics state that there is a projected requirement for 5,559 additional houses between 2011 and 2026. However, the WG has also introduced a 10-year migration variant which if used takes the required number of houses up to 7,399.

This is still too low for the council so the paper explores all of the reasons why the figure should be higher. This includes saying the period of the census and current projections etc. was at a time of low economic growth and in particular the Vale forms part of the regional housing plan and a special economic growth area.

A consultant (BE group) was used to project that an additional 1,000 to 1,602 dwellings could be required to cover this rise in jobs so the figure of 1,602 was added to the total. Then add another 499 to reflect the regional role and maintain affordable housing. This gives a grand total of 9,500 and when 10 per cent flexibility is added, you arrive at the figure you first thought of 10,450. Magic!!

I read the paper with growing disbelief. The paper points out that although the majority of objections to the required numbers were that they were too high but there was a significant number stating they were too low. These were all house builders!

The report also didn't mention that the council and government have been trying to increase jobs in the area for the last 20 years, with lots of business land available, with limited success. The paper also mentions that over 4,500 affordable houses require to be built over the next five years and the LDP states that the majority of these are required in the Barry area. How does the plan address this fact?

The inspector has started to hear objections to the LDP and in January there are two meetings to discuss housing numbers. It was a bit disappointing to see that a significant number of the participants are people with a financial interest in having a high number of houses built i.e. house builders.

It is clear that the council must use the latest WG projections as a starting point for their projections and demonstrate that the requirement for additional houses is based on sound evidence.

I would just state that the UK projection for increase in house numbers in Wales as a whole over the period is 10.2 per cent. Why then does the council think that the Vale needs an increase of 18 per cent?

Mike Carney, Cowbridge.

'No to offer of meeting'

I REFER to the letter last week from Coun Gwyn John of Llantwit Major, where he questioned my letter from the previous issue of The GEM regarding street lighting in Llantwit Major.

I am certainly not a mischief maker, I am not in the habit of writing letters without first of all gathering some facts, a lot of which come from the council themselves.

I would also like to make it quite plain that the information regarding the street lighting in Llantwit Major actually came from a parent who has a daughter who lives in Llantwit, who confirmed that the street lights are not turned off.

Mr John invites me to a meeting with himself and officers to explain some of the issues that I have written about in previous letters.

I am afraid I will turn that invitation down, as I feel if the council need to explain issues, they can explain it to all the people.

DJ Radford, Barry.

Church tree festival in Barry

THE fourth Christmas tree festival at St Mary's Church, Holton Road, Barry, opens at 6.30pm on December 9, after judging of the trees by Vale Mayor, Coun Fred Johnson, Barry Town Mayor Coun Emma Pritchard and Jane Hutt, local Assembly Member.

Barry's Lee Selby, IBF Featherweight Champion will switch on the lights.

A concert will begin at 7pm with Cadoxton School choir, and their drum section.

Geoff Peart will present some traditional folk music, concluding with the talented youngsters from Superstars. Tickets £4 each (includes refreshments) all children admitted free.

St Mary's Church will then be open from 10am to 4.30pm on December 10 and December 11.

School choirs will entertain over the two days, including Oakfield Primary, Jenner Park Primary, St Helen's Primary, Gladstone Infants, Barry Island Primary and St Baruc Welsh Primary.

On December 12 Father Christmas will be dropping in at 9am for breakfast with the girls and boys. Tickets for this will be £5 with a gift for every child. Parents' breakfast £2.50. The church will then be open from 10.30am to 1.30pm for the viewing of trees.

At 2pm there will be an afternoon of carols and folk music, plus St Athan Junior Brass Band, People's First Charity, The Real Lives Choir, and St Helen's Primary School Choir. Winners of the Christmas tree festival will be announced and certificates will be presented to the winners of the three categories by the Vale Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor Coun Charlotte Williams and Jane Hutt AM. Tickets for this event are £3 (includes refreshments) children admitted free.

A donation from the festival will be made to the Llanmau charity. Contact Susan on 07866 078665 or 01446 747928 for more details.

WALES MANAGER OPENS JENNER PARK'S NEW 'STATE OF THE ART' 3G SURFACE

A NEW chapter was marked in the proud history of Jenner Park stadium in Barry last Thursday when Wales manager Chris Coleman officially opened the new 3G artificial playing surface.

He marked the occasion by kicking the first ball in a football festival featuring 160 youngsters from primary schools across the Vale.

Coleman was also presented with a gift by pupils at nearby Jenner Park Primary school to congratulate him on his success as the national boss.

The new pitch, installed following a six-figure investment by the Vale Council, is part of an ambitious plan to open the stadium up to the community and secure its future as the premier sporting venue in the Vale.

Speaking at the opening Chris Coleman commended the renovation, saying: "Football, like any sport, starts in the community and we need facilities like this one if we are going to nurture the next generation of sporting stars.

"Barry has a proud footballing history. The new pitch will be great for Barry Town United and hopefully will help propel them back into the Welsh Premier League, but the real benefit will be to the children playing here and the community as a whole.

"Credit must go to the Vale Council for having the vision to make this happen and for making a major investment which will pay dividends for many years to come."

Jenner Park faced an uncertain future earlier this year as its high running costs were unsustainable in light of the unprecedented financial challenges being faced by the Vale Council.

However, the installation of the new pitch will not only see costs cut but also use of the stadium made available to the whole community.

Coun Gwyn John, cabinet member for visible services and leisure, said: "The easy decision would have been to simply close the doors to Jenner Park for good. Thankfully for all of those that value sport, the Vale of Glamorgan Council had the vision to develop a better facility and new way of managing it that will ensure this historic ground is used for generations to come.

"It is the council's aim to get more people living more active lives and the renovation of Jenner Park will help us take a huge step forward towards this goal.

"The new Jenner Park will be somewhere where children and young people can develop their skills on a perfect playing surface and where adults at all levels can play the game they love in a first class facility."

Gavin Chesterfield, manager of Barry Town United FC, said: "Jenner Park is renowned throughout Welsh football and beyond. There have been many great nights throughout the stadium's proud 102 year history. However, the installation of the new surface has given the stadium a new lease of life and it is now a hive of sporting activity.

"As a club, the new pitch has opened up many possibilities in terms of how we engage the local community and we will be announcing many exciting new ventures in the coming weeks and months. To complement the launch of the new pitch the club has given out 300 free tickets to children and their families for our upcoming Welsh Cup third round tie versus Denbigh Town on December 5."

Work on the new playing surface was completed in October and the pitch has since received FIFA's highest level of accreditation, FIFA Pro. The artificial surface has already seen action at levels ranging from mini-football to Barry Town United FC's home games in the Welsh Football League Division 1.

As part of the same programme of work being undertaken by the council, construction is soon to begin on four smaller five-a-side pitches at the Colcot Sports Centre in Barry. Along with the upgraded Jenner Park these pitches will provide a suite of surfaces within the Vale's largest town that can be played on by all sections of the community 365 days a year.

Michelin CrossClimate launched – IS THIS A GAME CHANGER?

IN the UK, we experience every sort of winter driving condition. Heavy snow in 2012, the cold and wet winter of 2014, the mild and warm winter of 2015 - the UK really is an unpredictable climate.

This unpredictability makes tyre choices for the British winters difficult. Without question, winter tyres are the right tyre for freezing and snowy conditions, but with the last few winters characterised by warm wet conditions, a summer tyre would be the smarter choice overall.

A Barry Tyre Centre spokesman said: "This has led us to start recommending 'all season' tyres as the correct tyre to fit in the winter.

"All season tyres offer approximately 85 per cent of a summer tyre's performance in the dry and wet, and 85 per cent of a winter tyre's performance in the snow which gives them a slightly better operation window for the UK than a full winter.

"While this balance of qualities is the best compromise currently available, the ideal tyre for the UK tyre market is a tyre which offers 99 per cent of a summer tyre's performance in the dry and wet, yet still offers the ability to perform in snow and ice for those few days a year we see adverse conditions.

"The good news is Michelin claim to have done exactly that with the new Michelin CrossClimate.

"The Michelin CrossClimate is the world's first summer tyre which can be used in winter conditions. TUV-tested, the new CrossClimate really does seem to be the magic bullet for the UK climate, with 99 per cent of a summer tyre's performance in the dry and wet, and 100 per cent of a winter tyre's performance in snow traction and braking.

"Is this too good to be true? Fortunately we've had some experience driving on this tyre, and we're happy to report it seems to do exactly as Michelin/TUV claim."

SEE THE BARRY TYRE CENTRE ADVERT ON PAGE 43.

New captain Liz Fine prepares to 'drive in'.

Liz starts her year in office

ON November 24, the new ladies' captain at Brynhill Golf Club, Mrs Liz Fine, was blessed with a break in the bad weather for her 'drive-in'.

Supported by the ladies' section, Liz duly got her year in office under way with a great second drive down the first fairway, her first being an exploding ball!

Previously, all the ladies paid money to guess where Liz's ball might land. The winner of this competition was Mrs Helena Coombes.

The day's golf competition was won by Lynda Lloyd with 17 points. Runner-up was Linda Hewlett with 14 points. Liz's chosen charity for this year is Wales Air Ambulance.

CH/LT

CLUB SIGN OFF 2015 IN STYLE!

The students shone at the recent WOMAA Championships.

FOLLOWING on from their recent success at the GTI British Open, the Cadoxton School of Tae Kwon Do competed in their last tournament of 2015.

The World Organization of Martial Arts Athletes British Open Championships (WOMAA) were hosted by Master Mal Johns & Leanne Emmerson.

The Cadoxton squad took advantage of the categories available on the day, points fighting, continuous fighting, kumite, patterns and weapons for all ages and levels.

The Cadoxton squad brought home with them a total of 54 medals - 16 gold, 25 silver, 13 bronze and 16 WOMAA British Champions.

The club already has a full 2016 calendar; after Christmas the squad will again be full training for local events and internationals in Birmingham, Liverpool, Germany and the USA.

Pictured above with their instructors and coaches are Matthew Bennett, Peter O'Callaghan, Lucy Newman, Keita Enfield, Ron Thomas; Jake Quigley, Cameron Evans, Ethan Andrus, Joel wells, Cian Allen, Lucia Cunningham; Charlie Rogers, Maddison Allen, Leland Butler & Cody Jacobsen.

For further information call (01446) 406372. **RT**

Pencoed RFC hold out for well-deserved victory...

THE Dulais Valley can be the most foreboding of venues, but on this occasion the Pencoed side rose to the challenge against the odds to record a fine 16-10 victory against a Seven Sisters side occupying fourth place in Division 1 West Central.

Pencoed won a couple of early turnovers through the efforts of back row forward Rhys Watkins and scrum half Kyle Barrett, with second row Dano Howells particularly prominent with a couple of determined charges.

The home game plan soon became quite clear, their pack aiming to bludgeon their way through the Pencoed ranks, often doubling and tripling up numbers in their efforts to force their way through.

This was the pattern for the opening 20 minutes before another close up assault saw home hooker Jordan Roderick cross close to the posts, wing threequarter Andrew Thomas adding the extras.

Despite the driving play of the home pack the Pencoed front row of skipper Kieron Moore, hooker Tom Drew, and loose head Christian Powell were getting the better of the close quarter exchanges at the scrummage and this ascendancy gave them the platform for outside half Adam Williams to open his side's account with a well judged 30 metre penalty goal in the blustery conditions.

Pencoed left wing David Young then did well to clear a dangerous situation in his own 22 to clear to touch and despite a few problems at the lineout Pencoed returned to the attack.

Williams probed with a short kick into the home 22, where chasing centre Gareth Dyer caught home full back Daniel Norton in possession and from the resultant penalty Williams made matters 7-6.

Pencoed were now starting to put some phases together to enjoy their best moments of the half and keep the home side under pressure.

A series of scrums in the home 22 saw Pencoed cement their authority at the set scrummage and only desperate home defence kept their line intact.

Pencoed, having lost hard working second row Ricky Somers relatively early in the match, were forced into positional changes, Aaron Halse moving to the boilerhouse with Rhys Vowles taking his place in the back row, the centre doing well in his emergency role.

Pencoed's pack problems were compounded at the interval with the loss of Halse through injury, Powell moving into the second row with young Brandon Nelson on at prop forward.

Pencoed's revamped pack then destroyed a home scrummage and as a result Williams kicked the penalty goal to go into the lead at 7-9.

The home side attacked from the restart and Rhys Clarke playing at right wing did well to chase back and check the home raid before Pencoed regrouped to clear to touch.

Pencoed were now starting to play with confidence into the elements and following another dominant scrummage Pencoed increased their lead.

No 8 Gareth Prentice released Barrett who broke cleanly before timing his pass to supporting full back Rhys Thomas who raced in at the posts from 22 metres, Williams adding the conversion for a 7-16 lead.

The home side kept themselves in the match with a penalty goal from Thomas and at 10-16 it was still anyone's match in the fading valley light.

The ardent Pencoed support were to endure a tense final couple of minutes but despite several late scares their team held out for a well deserved victory full of character.

On Saturday a supporters coach will travel to Skewen for a 2.30pm kick-off.

TR

We welcome your sports news - email us at: *gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk*

Cowbridge darts league round-up

ON Tuesday November 24, the semi-finals and final of the mixed doubles were played at the Edmondes Arms.

After two very tight semi-final matches the final lineup was an all-Farmers Arms affair. In the final Maureen Fleming and Nigel Thomas (substitute Rob Jones) defeated Pam Adams and Tony Fox (substitute Owen Carter) 3-1.

Also that evening the postponed league match between Llanharry and the Edmondes B was played. It was a close game with Llanharry coming out winners 5-4.

Present league standings, after seven weeks, are now: Edmondes B (39 points), Farmers Arms and Highwayman Inn (32), Edmondes C and Llanharry (31), Six Bells Inn (28), Edmondes A (27), Farmers B (H&H) (21) and Old Post Ladies (11).

Next week, Tuesday December 8, the last full programme of league matches (league week nine) before the Christmas and New Year break will be played.

The Old Post Ladies hosts the Highwayman Inn, the Edmondes A hosts the Farmers B (H&H), the Edmondes C hosts Llanharry and the Farmers Arms hosts the Edmondes B. The Six Bells Inn do not have a game.

All matches start at 8.15pm and spectators are welcome. For further information e-mail Paul at cowbridgedarts@gmail.com, up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk.

PJT

Seaview Lads results

THE first leg of the annual Christmas competition was fished on Sunday, November 29 in very high winds and torrential downpours - but this did nothing to deter a large turn-out of anglers.

An extra incentive was the chance to win the Wyndham Page Trophy commemorating one of our founding members.

Many anglers had only just returned from the annual trip to the Canaries where they had enjoyed halcyon summer like weather and excellent fishing.

Many landed rays approaching the 100lb mark along with the numerous exotic species including trumpet fish and barracuda. Their welcome home could not have been more different.

Hurricane force gusts of over 60 knots forced many fish to stay on their sea bed but enough did come out to ensure that many anglers caught something. Weights were not high overall; those anglers that weighed in managed a solitary fish or two, but Aida Harris weighed in almost 4kg on what was a challenging day to stand up, let alone fish!

Congratulations to all that braved the conditions and we eagerly await round two!

Results: 1st A Harris 3.82 kg, 2nd K Salah 2.94, 3rd M Langford 2.14, 4th C Mcinerery 1.61, 5th P Crook 1.52, 6th S Doble 1.32.

JC

Busy week for Barry chess club

ANOTHER busy week for the Barry Chess Club, with all four of its teams in the East Glamorgan League in action, together with the West Wales Chess Congress held at Llansamlet.

In the league there was the unusual event of both of the lower teams, Quarks and Gambits, winning their matches in divisions 3 and 4 respectively. Both teams recorded their second victories of the season with 3-2 away victories.

The Quarks won their match picking up the points on the three bottom boards. It could have been even better as there were winning opportunities on board 2.

This moves the Quarks up to eighth in the table. They remain in the relegation spot on tie break from Penarth on the basis that we lost 3.5 to 1.5 in our opening match of the season at home to Penarth. A big win in the return fixture in January could prove to be our most vital fixture/result in the season.

The Gambits found themselves outgraded on all boards as usual, but good wins from team captain Stephen Bonutto together with Jason Grice and Ray Denley, gave us an unexpected victory against one of the early season frontrunners.

The Gambits also sit in eighth position in the league but are more comfortable as there is no relegation from division 4.

In division 1 it was not so successful for our teams. The Bosons however earned a valuable point against the Cardiff Castles with a win for Matthew Parry over Walter Braun and draws for Matthew Davies, Steve Cunliffe and Dave Parsons.

The Camelots did not fare so well at North Cardiff, losing by 3.5 to 1.5 against the Woodpushers. However in perhaps the result of the season so far Sam Jukes beat Peter Heaven; Peter has a ranking of 2144 while Sam's ranking is 1713.

The Bosons sit comfortably in third place. It seems unlikely that they will be able to maintain a strong challenge for the title but we can live in hope.

The Camelots are in ninth place above the already seemingly marooned St John's College Positrons. The Camelots remain three points from safety but with a poor tie break score. Relegation, while not a certainty, is looming!

In the West Wales Congress there were 30 entries including past and present members Lee Davis, Joe Turner and Nigel Ralphs in the Open Section, while in the Major Section the club was represented by Stephen Bonutto.

Lee finished in ninth place with four draws and a win from his five games. Joe was less successful with two wins and a draw from his five games to finish 19th.

Nigel took a bye in round 1 - this can sometimes give an easier route in the next rounds but that is not always the case. This time Nigel drew matches in the next three rounds, only losing to Joe Fathallah of the Cardiff club in round 5. Nigel finished in 21st place. All three of these players were seeded to finish higher than then actually did.

In the Major section, Stephen, who travelled with Nigel, also took a bye. Stephen was seeded to finish 12th out of the 14 competitors in this section.

He beat Kevin O'Rourke from the Caerphilly Club in round three, losing his other three matches to finish with 1.5 points. He actually finished in 12th place so was the only Barry-linked player to achieve their correct seeded position.

The Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30pm each Monday at the West End Club. St. Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY. The club is open to players of all standards; whether you are interested in playing competitive chess or just the occasional friendly games.

New players are very welcome to just turn up on the night but if you contact one of the club members through the website we can explain what is happening on the night you have in mind, and arrange for someone to greet you on your arrival.

For more details visit our website at http://barrychessclub.yolasite.com.

PHIL JONES

We welcome your sports news, reports - and other items of interest - email us at: *gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk*

News from Dinas Powys lady golfers

There were plenty of awards at Dinas Powis Golf Club ladies section annual presentation

ON November 17, Dinas Powis Golf Club ladies section held their annual presentation of trophies for the current year.

We offer our congratulations to all the winners for a successful season (pictured above).

On November 3, a Turkey Trot 2 Stableford was held - 1st Annie Blackburn 22pts, 2nd Sue Bridle 16pts, 3rd Sally Livsey Davies 15pts on countback from Lisa Ryley and Vicki Ellison.

On November 10, Turkey Trot 3 Medal - 1st Annie Blackburn 46 - 10.5 = 35.5nett, 2nd Sue Bridle 45 - 8.5 = 36.5, 3rd Ann Mahenthiralingam 46 - 6.5 = 39.5.

On November 17, Turkey Trot 4 Stableford - 1st Lisa Ryley 19pts, 2nd Annie Blackburn 15pts, 3rd Maxine Hird 12pts.

RY

Tournament success for local youngsters

RECENTLY, Barry Kyokushin Karate club hosted and competed in the second annual Wales Kyokushin Open Tournament.

Up first were the kata (pattern) competitors. Angel Benavant was first to place, gaining first place and her first Welsh Championship title in the six to eight year old division, against 10 other competitors who had a lot more experience.

Next to compete was Dominika Mielkilzuk who was unfortunately just pipped for first place, but came home with a fantastic second place.

In the 10 to 13 year old kata, the club secured all three places. After an incredibly tough two rounds against much higher-graded competitors, Justine Bolanos achieved a very well deserved third place.

Leanne Lirio achieved second place after impressing the judges, and for the second year running Ben Bolanos achieved his second first place and retained his Welsh Champion title.

Next up was Luke Murphy, who at the start of this month achieved his second kyu (brown belt).

Luke performed two excellent katas and was incredibly unfortunate to be just pipped for first place, but came home with a fantastic and well deserved second place.

Claire Norman was next in the Kyu grade adult kata and performed two fantastic katas. Having only trained for a little over a year, Claire got third place in her category after some very tough and experience kata competitors.

Finally, Rhian Evans, who achieved her second kyu along with Luke earlier this year, was up in the Black Belt category against several much higher graded, very well seasoned international competitors.

After a very tough second round Rhian achieved first place and the Welsh Champion title for the second year running.

Rhian has won four national titles in kata in the three years she has been training.

To next compete were the kids WUKO competitors. Sebastian Barzewski was first to place after several tough fights. Sebastian won his semi-final fight and sailed through to the final where he faced a great competitor. Sebastian came away with a fantastic second place trophy.

Next to compete was Justine Bolanos in an incredibly tough WUKO category. Justine got through to the finals – a round robin against two other fantastic competitors, and came away with an incredible second place after three very difficult fights.

Ben Bolanos was up next against WUKO competitors that were much taller and bigger than him, but stood his own, and achieved a fantastic third place to add to his first place in kata.

Paul Lambert was next to fight in male clicker against several younger and higher graded competitors.

After a fantastic first three rounds where Paul came out victorious, he entered the final against an international competitor from Denmark.

After an incredibly close fight, Paul achieved an absolutely incredible second place, losing his final fight by just one point.

Tyrone Conway was then to fight in the Novice Knockdown men's lightweight.

After some very gruelling rounds and extensions, Tyrone achieved an absolutely fantastic third place in his first knockdown tournament.

The club committee decided to donate all the profits from this event to Sebastian Sargent, a local boy with cerebral palsy and autism.

Funds are being raised to buy him an all-terrain wheelchair, and the tournament raised just over £400, with local company Spartan Martial Arts and sports suppliers LTD helping to round the figure up to £500.

Anyone wanting to donate can go to https://www.gofundme.com/7f487mdk.

PS

Indoor bowlers left 'disappointed' with away victory!

SULLY Bowls Championship team travelled to Bridgend on Saturday, November 21 to play Ogwr at the Indoor Bowling Green in the Leisure centre.

Sully were expecting a win as Ogwr are in a transitional period having lost a number of their star players, therefore Sully were looking for wins on most rinks.

Sully were in for a shock before the game began as the arena was cold as the heating system was not working; in fact the system was blowing out cold air.

The game began with Sully players wearing any tops or coats they could bowl in but this didn't stop them taking a eight shot lead after five ends, with four rinks ahead.

From ends six to 10 Sully were maintaining their form and had gone further by the end of the 10th, leading by 14 shots, 69-55.

Ken McLeod's rink was struggling against the Ogwr rink skipped by Jim Hoskins and were adrift by eight shots, while the rinks of Fred Phillips, Brian Griffiths and Chris Ackland were level with their opponents.

It was the rink of Graham Cogbill, Gary Eastment and Mike Doyle, skipped by the reliable Brian Foscolo and Martin Clarke-Squires' rink, who were ensuring the Sully lead.

As the game progressed it was still Foscolo's and Clarke-Squires' rinks enabling Sully to stay ahead, each leading by 22 shots and 13 shots respectively, while Sully's other four rinks were fighting hard to gain the initiative with the overall score at the 15th end 90-78 in Sully's favour.

Sully were now out of their comfort zone, only leading by a dozen shots with four of the six rinks behind going into the final six ends. It was now going to be a battle in the minds of the Sully players – from being super confident of a good win, the pressure was now on to hold onto a lead that Ogwr were eating into.

The 16th end saw Sully take eight shots across the rinks to move 20 shots ahead and ease the pressure but the rinks of Chris Ackland, Brian Griffiths and Ken McLeod lost more ground on their opponents over the closing ends, with Fred Phillips' rink having a tremendous tussle with Ogwr skip Brian Tucker over the last few ends, with the Sully rink finally succumbing by three shots.

The rinks of Ackland, Griffiths and McLeod also failed to get to grips with their opponents, losing their games by seven, six and six shots respectively.

Fortunately Foscolo's rink won decisively by 27 shots, 32-5, while Clarke-Squires' rink also had a resounding win by 16 shots, 29-13.

As a result of these two rinks Sully gained an overall win, 128-107. Although they gained 14 points out of 22 on offer, there was a slight disappointment that more rinks had failed to gain more points, but the win places Sully just eight points behind leaders Taff Ely and two points behind second-placed Newport - and both clubs have to come to Sully in the new year.

FP

Sports see games postponed

SULLY Sports RFC suffered a double cancellation last week with both the first and second teams having their games called off.

The firsts return to action on Saturday, December 5, away to Tongwynlais, kick off 2.30pm – meet at Sully Clubhouse 12.30pm, while the seconds are away to St Peters.

Last Friday, November 27, a reunion of older players/members was held at the clubhouse and it turned out to be a great success, with 20 'old-timers' enjoying a buffet, catching up on each other's current circumstances, lots of memories shared and stories of the past related.

Those present agreed that this social should become a regular occurrence, with efforts to trace and invite as many of past players/members as can be found to the next event, which will be held on Friday, January 29, and thereafter every two months on the last Friday of the month.

The venue for the reunion will rotate between Sully, Barry and Dinas Powys – watch this space.

Last Saturday saw a very successful 'hypnotist night' held at the club - many thanks to chairman Richard Gully for all his efforts in putting on the event.

A comedy night is in the pipeline for the New Year, and details will be published soon.

MS

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
www.barry-today.co.uk
www.cowbridge-today.co.uk
www.llantwit-major-today.co.uk
www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Barry seconds in pulsating draw

BARRY RFC seconds travelled to the capital to face Clwb Rygbi as they hope to build on the momentum from last weekend's win.

Coaches Rhidian Scott and Martin Tanner were yet again rocked with the late withdrawal of Curtis Miller hours before kick off, and were forced to reshuffle the pack.

There were recalls for Nick Rolfe, James Sullivan and Luke Bounds, while Joel Williams continued at fly-half after impressing last weekend from the bench.

In atrocious conditions at Llandaff Fields, both sides tried to play a brand of attractive running rugby from the off but soon regained common sense as the forwards took over.

It was the home side who adapted to the conditions quicker, taking advantage of some loose Barry tackling in the first quarter to score a try underneath the posts.

Barry were jolted into action and began to lay siege to the Clwb line. Buoyed by the dominant front row of Gareth Hall, Lee Turnbull and Ben Such, who were winning scrums with ease, Barry made inroads deep into the home 22 and were finally rewarded as following a series of forward drives, Rolfe powered over for his first try of the season. Matt Russell was successful with the conversion from an impossible angle out wide.

The momentum had swung and Barry continued to dominate in the set piece and were also winning the battle in the contact area.

Powerful surges from Remy Frenay, Lloyd Dutton and Ben Such saw another attack on the home line, and despite some desperate Clwb tackling, captain Kyle Case was the next to score. Russell added the extras to give Barry a 14-7 lead at half-time.

Barry seemed to be in control for most of the second half but with playing conditions deteriorating neither side could venture much into an attacking position. It was the home side who had more possession, and often found space out wide, but good cover tackling from Rhidian Mepham, Dutton and Frenay prevented any score.

It took the official to intervene as he controversially binned Case after an offence in the ruck, and with a mismatch in numbers the home side equalised with a try out wide.

With only 14 men Barry continued to probe and played a sensible game of tight rugby, putting the Clwb eight under enormous pressure.

Slowly gaining a foothold in an attacking position, the Barry forwards drove patiently for the line, and after a number of unsuccessful attempts, there was no stopping Dutton as he crashed over from two yards. Russell was again on target with his conversion to give Barry a seven point lead with just minutes to go.

Unfortunately just like last weekend, the green-and-whites failed to close out the game, and this time there was to be no reprieve as the home side took full advantage to score a try through some tired tackling as the game ended on a pulsating 21-21 draw.

While both management and players will agree there was room for improvement, the performance and effort in the last two weekends have been superb and after a slow start to the season Barry would hope to kick on for the rest of the campaign.

Barry second XV host Dinas Powys this weekend while the third XV are home to St Albans.

KC

The Barry and District ladies skittles league

LATEST results for November 16:

First division: Barry Stars (M Richards 34) 327, SV Gals (J Ladner, R Sewell, L Kingsman, J Richards) 310; Family Affair (D Brown 29) 233, Special Angels (P Grisdale 25) 237; Castle Bandits (P Thomas 27) 220, Coppers (S Ford 29) 255; Cigar Ladies (L Webb 30) 291, Bakers Dozen (E Baker 36) 329; Breakaways (C Parfitt 32) 292, Bobby's Girls (J Macdonald 28) 258; Colcot Ladies (K Tayloer 310) 272, Allsorts (C Griffiths 30) 252.

Second division: Clickies (M Harney 34) 312, Cad Con Fillies (T Clements 29) 292; Red Admiral (G Williams 26) 258, Castaways (S Billings 24) 207; After Eights (P Mepham 36) 308, Vixens (D Marks 31) 296; Rhoose Starlights (D Stradling 26) 263, Little Devils (L Bowsher , T Jones 27) 279; S V Lights (M Seixas 28) 267, Rhoose Ravers (J Bishop 27) 233; Witchill Widows (S Murray 30) 310, Merry Makers (C Edwards 34) 305.

Third division: Dolly Mixtures (P Grigham, E Bryan 24) 312, Hill Billies (G Moorcraft 22) 207; Roller Coasters (P Thomas 28) 219, Persuaders (J Neil, L Organ, G Hughes 21) 199; Friends and Neighbours (C Ferris, E Brown 26) 243, Westenders (J Andrews, L Lambeth 25) 238; Fallen Angels (J Tudor 30) 282, La Belles (R Closs, R Day 26) 264; Airways Angels (E Jones 27) 251, S V Ladies (C Griffriths 25) 214.

Fourth division: Hell Raisers (L Waters 25) 234, Guardian Angels (S Aston, S Clarke, J Overton 23) 206; Witches (M Allen, P Cookson 27) 234, Challengers (L Morgan 23) 216; Living On a Spare (E McLaggon 33) 295, Rebels (L Spurr 32) 319; Socialites (F Nolan, K Glover 29) 260, Uptown Girls (R Dutton, L Hobbs 26) 256; Liberals (S Boyd 22) 149, Off The Rails (I Rosser 24) 187; Nite Outers (M Hudson 25) 212, Odd Bopds (T Perry 23) 175.

Kanku Do impress at tournament

There was plenty of success for Kanku Do!

ON Saturday, November 21, Kanku Do took a squad of 11 to the second Welsh Kyokushin Karate tournament held at the Memo Barry.

First up were Charlotte Hewitson and Kasey Lewis with their well polished performances of kata. This earned Charlotte first place and her first ever trophy! Kasey was very unlucky not to place.

The 14-16 year kumite category saw Morgan Long claim first with a very accomplished and technical win against solid fighters.

The 12-14 year kumite category was always going to be a huge battle with five Kanku Do fighters in the same category!

After some brave displays the club took first, second and third places (Jack Long, Jack Garrett and Ellis Walker respectively).

The club very much enjoyed the day and are looking forward to next year already.

For information about joining please call to St David's Church Hall on a Tuesday from 7pm-8pm.

Squad: Morgan Long, Jack Long, Jack Garrett, Ashleigh Millard, Kyle Millard, Luca Cullinane, Ellis Walker, Charlotte Hewitson, Kasey Lewis and Tyler Donnelly.

NL

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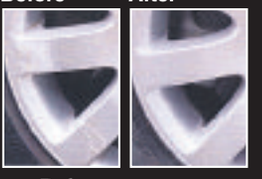

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Great success for Welsh Karate in English event

Josh Dwyer, Jack George and Harrison Williams, the Karate Wales under-15 team.

Leah Copeland was senior ladies double champion!

Emma Squire won the 15-17 girls open Kata.

A NUMBER of Vale Karate members were among the Karate Wales squad which competed at the UWK England Open recently.

The Kata events were first and Wales' first gold medal came from Vale Karate's talented 15-year-old Emma Squire, who won the girls 15-17 Kata, a great result as she was probably the youngest competitor in the category.

Wales' youngest squad member, Ellie-Jayne Farrugia (nine), took a bronze in the under-10 Kata while Chiara Baker (11) took a bronze in the 10-12 before stepping up to the 12-14 category, where she took another bronze!

Leah Copeland (21) took a silver medal in the ladies Shotokan event, where she was narrowly beaten by the Romanian multiple WUKF World champion Eva Kerekes, before putting in the Kata performances of her life to take the gold medal in the ladies open.

Jack George, although only 12, won the last Welsh Karate League under-14 event, beating boys who are now 14. He demonstrated his improvement, and a hint of what may be to come, with brilliant displays, winning both the 10-12 145cm-plus event, beating fellow Welsh squad member Morgan Harvey in the final, and the 12-14 Shobu Ippon event, where he headed a Wales 1-2-3-3 with Tushi Karunanithy in silver and Josh Davies and Josh Dwyer (Vale) in bronze medal positions.

Josh Dwyer was also among the medals in the 13-14 165cm-plus category, where he won another bronze medal.

Alysha Lee, another fast-improving fighter, was a whisker away from reaching the final in the 10-12 145cm-plus event, earning a well-deserved bronze medal.

Leah Copeland had a bye in the first Kumite round, but was in the toughest part of the draw as her first opponent was none other than WUKF's top female fighter, Romania's Magdalena Tier, who won the under-60kg and open events at the UWK and WUKF World Championships in Slovenia last month, beating Leah in the second round on that occasion.

In the shock result of the tournament, Leah fearlessly threw herself into the challenge and brought her supporters to their feet with her greatest win yet!

Anything less than the gold medal would still have been somewhat anticlimactic, but she didn't disappoint, beating two of England's best females on the way to taking her second gold of the day.

Rhydian Pullin came close to adding to Wales' gold medal tally, narrowly falling at the final hurdle, to secure silver.

The 10-14 male rotation team event took place at 8pm, the last event of a gruelling day.

Harrison Williams, Josh Dwyer and Jack George represented the Principality in style and had secured a 7-2 win at time up, only to be disqualified due to a rule infringement.

A successful end to a great event which highlighted again the immense strength of Vale Karate and the Karate Wales squad.

On and Off The Turf
WITH BRIAN LEE

COWBRIDGE rider Byron Moorcroft was in good form at the Black Forest Lodge Club Point-To-Point Steeplechases at Black Forest Lodge on Sunday where he rode a double.

Byron took the restricted race on David Brace's *Doctor Braveheart*, which had finished second in a hunter chase in Ireland last April, and later in the afternoon landed the restricted on the Jonathan Tudor trained Northgeorge.

The former won by a head from *Templestate Floresco* and the latter scored by 12 lengths from *Wotzisname*. The runner-up in each case was ridden by national champion point-to-point rider Will Biddick.

WELSH WIZARD'S WINNING RUN CONTINUES

'Welsh wizard' National Hunt trainer Evan Williams of Llancarfan, who has been in tremendous form of late, landed a 40-1 double at Doncaster last Friday with *Go Long* and *Wild Bill* and less than 24 hours later he was back in the winner's enclosure when his *Tea In Transvaal* took the opening TRA Mares' Novices' Hurdle at Newbury.

Five-year-old *Go Long*, a 6-1 chance, who was racing for the first time in 254 days, won the Massarellas' Mister Softee Novices' Hurdle by three and a half lengths from the odds-on favourite *Charbel* and six-year-old *Wild Bill*, the 4-1 co-favourite, was a two and a half lengths winner of the Kelly's Of Cornwall Novices' Limited Handicap Chase.

Four-year-old *Tea In Transvaal*, the 11-8 favourite, came home six lengths ahead of *Colla Pier* and like *Go Long* and *Wild Bill* was ridden by stable jockey Paul Moloney, who deserves at least some of the credit for the 'Welsh wizard's' success.

ON TOUR'S LONG TRIP PAYS OFF

Evan Williams' *On Tour's* long trip from Llancarfan to Carlisle on Sunday paid off when the promising seven-year-old landed the Apollobet Home Cashback Special Novices' Chase by three parts of a length from *Sirabad*.

On Tour was ridden by Paul Moloney who also was successful on *Divine Port* and *Virnon*.

NATIONAL BOOK

My book 'The Welsh Grand National – from Deerstalker to Emperor's Choice' (£14.99, paperback) is available now.

First staged at Cardiff's Ely Racecourse in 1895, the Welsh Grand National has also taken place at Newport before finding its current home, Chepstow. This book is the definitive history of the premier racing event in the Principality.

The story encompasses more than 100 years of history and includes all of the great jockeys, trainers and horses who have triumphed or failed.

This includes the remarkable case of Golden Miller's 1936 attempt to win the race; despite winning an incredible five Cheltenham Gold Cups and the Aintree Grand National, the mighty Miller could only finish third in the Welsh event.

Richly illustrated throughout, this volume is an essential purchase for anyone with an interest in racing or the sporting heritage of Wales.

Barrivale Bridge Club results

RESULTS from Barrivale Bridge Club for November 24 – which was the concluding week of the Barrivale Team Championship:

First: Irene Thomas, Jenny Vaughan, Mike Close and Mike Best. 65 IMPS: second, Mark Roderick, Noelle Bond, Peter Millar and Mick Green 36 IMPS; third, Jane Brook, Denis Mottram, Celia Thomas and Huw Thomas 14 IMPS.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale. A partner may be arranged if required. If you would like to join, call 01446 418380, 01446 733425 or 01446 735592. Call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

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Ath show character to emerge with win in tough encounter

BRIDGEND Athletic showed huge character to overcome horrendous wind and rain and a gluepot of a pitch at Newbridge to emerge 16-10 winners and pick up a valuable four point win which moved them to 10th in the table – only five points adrift of sixth place.

They had first use of the wind though at times it tended to swirl around the ground. Against a much heavier pack the Athletic eight showed great technique to move a driving maul 40 metres up the field and put Newbridge under pressure inside their own 22.

They were awarded a scrum five metres from the try line. Scrum half Richard Howson, making an impressive Athletic debut on loan from Cowbridge, moved a quick strike to outside half Scott Govan who fed an inside pass to centre Lewis Evans on a strong run that was stopped just short of the try line.

Flanker Sean Williams picked up the ball and drove over under the posts to put the Athletic ahead. Lewis Evans' conversion opened up a 7-0 advantage.

The Athletic continued to press. Their lineout was more controlled with Williams the main target man catching the greasy ball, while Newbridge were often tapping back, allowing the Athletic back row of Ben Howe, Stuart Edbrook and Williams to put their scrum half under considerable pressure.

A good touchline kick from Howson put Newbridge under considerable pressure inside their own 22 and they conceded a penalty five metres inside the touchline. Evans made light of the swirling wind to land the goal and stretch the Athletic lead to 10-0.

A strong run by wing Harry Griffiths was halted by a heavy tackle inside the Newbridge 22, forcing him to lose possession and a potential try scoring move came to nothing.

Newbridge made a rare sortie into the Athletic half and a wild Athletic inside pass put the Athletic under all sorts of pressure. Newbridge moved the ball along the line and Athletic hooker Nathan Holman was adjudged to have deliberately knocked the ball on and was consigned to the bin.

Newbridge elected for a scrum five against the seven man Athletic pack, with Lee Murphy coming on at hooker, instead of a penalty shot at goal.

For the first time in the match they pushed the Athletic back and No 8 Lewis Blackard picked up to drive over wide out. The conversion failed but the Athletic, despite dominating the half, found themselves only 10-5 ahead at half-time with Newbridge having use of the elements in the second half.

Despite playing against the elements the Athletic were showing good ball retention with Griff Davies outstanding and did not seem under any pressure until a dropped pass on halfway saw Newbridge blindside flanker Luke Morgan pick up and run unopposed over in the corner to level the scores.

Newbridge had an opportunity to go ahead but a penalty kick bounced back into play off the crossbar and the Athletic were able to clear.

The game swung at 70 minutes in the Athletic's favour. They were pressing the Newbridge line when the Newbridge openside flanker illegally stopped an Athletic try and was shown a yellow card.

The Athletic were awarded a penalty. Evans again defied the elements with a well-judged kick from wide out to put the Athletic 13-10 ahead.

It was now the Athletic's turn to enjoy a one man scrum advantage. Props Matt Muir and Wayne Fookes and hooker Nathan Holman caused all sorts of problems to the Newbridge scrum and in the 72nd minute forced a penalty which Evans again converted to stretch the Athletic lead to 16-10.

Newbridge were now desperate and were trying to move the ball wide having failed to get any change from a lighter Athletic pack with attempted driving mauls.

The Athletic backs were also up for the battle and good tackling by centres Chris Price, his replacement Tom Jenkins and Evans and the back three of Chris Lewis, Griffiths and Dan Howells showed Newbridge this was not a viable alternative to breach a solid Athletic defence.

A feature of the second half had been the driving plays of locks Griff Davies, Tom Penry-Ellis and replacement Jonathon Stoker to retain the possession for the Athletic.

In the final few minutes they choked the life out of the Newbridge effort with excellent ball retention in tight play.

Both sides left the field barely distinguishable from each other, covered from head to toe with mud, but the Athletic drove back down the valley with the very valuable win leaving Newbridge with a losing bonus point.

This Saturday the Athletic entertain Bargoed at the Bridgend Ford Brewery Field, before entertaining league leaders Merthyr at the same venue the following Saturday, December 5.

AB

PORTHCAWL CLUB'S TACTICAL TALKS

PORTHCAWL Bridge Club continued its monthly seminars, with a talk on 'unassuming cue bids' – not as complicated as it sounds.

The aim of these talks is to provide that little extra modern technique, even for players who have been playing for many years.

The next talk will be on January 14, (topic – 'wide range one no-trump responses') and the club extends an invitation to neighbouring clubs to attend and play afterwards.

Recent club results: Saturday, November 14: First – Trish Saunders and Roger Draper; second – Maurice and Margaret Harris.

Thursday, November 19: First – Pat Roper and Tony Haworth; handicap – Sue Anthony and Peter Bennett.

Saturday, November 21: First – Julian Pottage and Tony Disley; second – Emer Disley and Tony Haworth.

Thursday, November 27: First – Pat Haworth and Gary Williams; handicap – Dian Jones and Kath Grossey.

The club meets twice a week, Saturday and Thursday at the Awel-y-Mor centre, 7pm-10.15pm. Visitors are welcome at any time. To contact the club, call secretary Trish on 01656 785794.

TH

HEAVY LOSS FOR MULES

KENFIG Hill RFC crashed to a heavy defeat to the league leaders Skewen, whose clinical finishing was the main difference between the two teams.

Despite the atrocious weather, the Skewen pitch was almost perfect under foot with only a strong blustery cross wind affecting handling and kicking.

The Mules' line-up was only finalised at 1pm with a number of backs unavailable due to a variety of reasons.

However, the game for the most, and especially in the first half, was a close encounter with both teams playing a pick and drive game but defences were on top with hardly any tackles being missed.

Skewen looked a well drilled outfit playing with lots of confidence and possessed a classy pair of half backs who dictated play for the full 80 minutes.

The Mules forwards always struggled at the line-out and with a scruffy set scrum, their inability to win good first phase ball meant that there was no continuity to their game.

Skewen scored a penalty goal and a converted try from a forward drive with the Mules coming close themselves when No 8 Jason Davies was tackled a yard short of the Skewen line.

The half was coming to an end when a missed tackle and good offload broke the Mules defence and the Skewen right winger ran in unopposed wide out.

With the conversion added Skewen went in the break 17-0 up. The score slightly flattered Skewen as it did not reflect the closeness of the match at that point.

The second half was more disappointing from the Mules' perspective as Skewen opened up the Mules defence, particularly on the short side, and appeared for a 10 minute period to be able to score at will, crossing for three well-taken tries in the process.

In total Skewen score 26 unanswered points in the second half but the Mules closed the floodgates and the final 15 minutes saw the Mules pressing for an opening score but the Skewen defence held out.

During this period it was disappointing that the Mules didn't try and move the ball to the open side as their young backline hardly had a chance to show their attacking potential.

In summary, the Mules have to step up if they wish to consolidate their position in the league. Most of the team is young and inexperienced, but if they stick at it and support the coaching team then no doubt better results will follow.

Finally, there must be a special mention for flanker Scott Waller, whose tackle count was off the scale - his commitment is a yardstick for others in the team.

DHD

News from the Bridgend Bridge Club...

THE results for recent events are:

Wednesday, November 25: 1st Rob Forman and Alan Heath, 2nd Marjorie Morris and Bill Turner, 3rd John Henson and Geoff Tinkler. Winners on handicap Rob Forman and Alan Heath.

Thursday, November 26: 1st Eileen and Glyn Williams, 2nd Sally Bryant and Paul Lyne, 3rd John Henson and Mike Williams. Winners on handicap Eileen and Glyn Williams.

Friday, November 27: 1st Mari Jones and Irene Wickham, 2nd Norma and David Newman, 3rd Jane Brook and Wendy Williams. Winners on handicap Mari Jones and Irene Wickham.

Regular club nights take place on Wednesday and Friday evenings at Nolton Church Hall. Play is scheduled to commence at 7pm so it helps if players arrive at least 10 minutes early.

On Thursday afternoons at 2pm, also at Nolton Church Hall, there is a gentle duplicate session. Master points are now awarded but it remains a relaxed occasion where players enjoy their bridge.

TG

Phoenix players called up by Wales

Melissa Clay (left) and Robyn Wilkins of Pencoed Phoenix are back in the Wales squad for this year's Dubai sevens tournament - the club wishes them every success.

PICTURE BY JULIE HANCOCK - http://juliehancock.org